

WINFORD, BLAINE ROMON', M.A. Nation, Myth, Cosmvision, and Self: Literary Representations of Transculturation, Nation-Building, and Citizenship in *Juyungo*, *Changó, el gran putas*, and *Chambacú, corral de negros*. (2011)
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This thesis compares the portrayal of nation-building, myth creation, and the determination of citizenship in the imagined community as presented in Adalberto Ortiz's *Juyungo*, as well as Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas* and *Chambacú, corral de negros*. Both authors employ elements of social and historical realism, as well as highlight issues of citizenship in the Americas that concern the African Diaspora (discrimination, miscegenation, liberation, intercultural alliance, etc.). However, there are major differences in the literary innovations that are employed in these works and the geographic trajectory of each text.

Whereas *Juyungo* localizes its action in the mostly-black province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador (and, as an extension, Colombia's Pacific lowlands) during the early 20th century, *Changó* is an attempt to traverse an entire hemisphere and an entire Diaspora. These circumstances, I argue, affect the literary innovations that each author utilizes. *Chambacú*, because of its structural similarities to *Juyungo*, will act as a facilitator for comparison between the two authors.

NATION, MYTH, COSMOVISION, AND SELF: LITERARY
REPRESENTATIONS OF TRANSCULTURATION,
NATION-BUILDING, AND CITIZENSHIP IN
JUYUNGO, CHANGÓ, EL GRAN PUTAS,
AND *CHAMBACÚ, CORRAL DE*
NEGROS

by

Blaine Romon' Winford

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Committee Chair

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This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Transculturation, nation-building, and the notion of citizenship in the imagined community have been constant subjects of debate since the development of the individual countries of which the Americas and the Caribbean are comprised. At least until the early-to-mid 20th century, in Spanish America, that discourse had been provided mostly by the white bourgeoisie, including discussions on race and gender, such as the Argentine intellectual Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*. Even discourses of total national inclusion, such as those found in José Martí's "Nuestra América" and José Vasconcelos's *La raza cósmica*, seem to have a primary purpose of creating a myth of ideological and political difference (North American white supremacy vs. Latin American *mestizaje*), despite very real and ironic exclusion of black and indigenous populations from such narrative in Latin America. Quite often, literary representations of the Afro-descendant in the nineteenth century placed the mulatto and black in separate social positions, although both are marginalized voices to varying degrees. Claudette Williams highlights the literary representation of the black and mulatto in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Spanish Caribbean narrative space as either threats to national order (racial hybridity and potential slave rebellion), hypersexual and immoral (black and mulatto women) and, later, symbols of national unity and

character (*mulatez*, or the representation of a nation as culturally mulatto). While *indigenista* and *negrista* writers (Jorge Icaza, Luis Palés Matos, Manuel de Cabral, etc.) provided a necessary space for positive (although often times romanticized and stereotyped, sometimes perpetuating old negative myths about blacks and mulattos) representations of Afro-descendant and Amerindian ethnic groups as cultural contributors, steps towards auto-representation became more prominent as individuals of those two ethnicities progressively questioned the one-sided conversations on the “other” through writing. Such narrative arrived in the form of poetry, essay, revisionist historical and cultural investigations, creative prose, and sometimes all of those genres at once.

Two twentieth-century Latin American artists of African descent, and their creative texts, are the subject of this thesis: Adalberto Ortiz, an Ecuadorian folklorist, poet and prose writer, and Manuel Zapata Olivella, a Colombian author, essayist, folklorist, and medical doctor. Both students of Pan-American culture, they possessed an understanding of the role of cross-cultural contact between peoples of African, Amerindian, and European descent as well as the historical and current social questions that have been presented in political, academic, and literary discourses of the nation and citizenship. In Ortiz’s *Juyungo* and Zapata’s *Changó, el gran putas*, the representations of transculturation, nation-building, and Afro-American (and to some extent, indigenous) bids for citizenship in the Americas develop through a variety of literary innovations, both similar to and distinct from one another. *Juyungo*, a *bildungsroman*¹ and a work of

¹ That is, a literary or cinematic work that deals with the protagonist’s “coming of age” or his/her human development through life experiences.

social realism, limits itself to a particular national setting, coastal northwestern Ecuador, centers on the lived experiences, cross-cultural contacts and intellectual activities of which its protagonists, Ascensión Lastre, Nelson Díaz, and Antonio Angulo, are participants. Although this work seems to represent primarily social questions such as discrimination and economic exploitation that affect Ecuadorians of African and indigenous descent, these issues are indeed relatable to the rest of the Americas. In the case of *Changó*, Zapata attempts to represent the common experiences of the African Diaspora, regardless of geographic, religious, generational, or cultural differences within their respective national borders. In order to carry out such a grand project, Zapata writes in the constant interactions amongst the living, dead, and divine. Through the involvement of *orisha* (Yoruba deities of West African origin) and the dead “ancestral shadows” (fictional characters as well as literary representations of historical figures) in the lives of the earthbound combatants (characters who are either victims of discrimination or agents of dissent and liberation), *Changó* seems to pose not only questions cross-cultural reconfiguration, nation and citizenship from a Pan-American trajectory, but a diachronic one as well. I will discuss primarily the literary representations of cross-cultural collaboration and conflict, and the implications that those contacts have in determining citizenship in the imagined community and how those questions are created and answered similarly and differently in each novel.

Background

Literary production by Hispanophone writers of African descent, with the exception of the poetry of Nicolás Guillén, was widely unknown to Anglophone (and, in many cases, other Spanish American) audiences until the 1960s and 1970s, after the events of the Cuban Revolution and when the Black Power movement came to fruition in the United States and in Latin America, including Brazil, in the 1970s and 1980s². For the most part, prose and poetry about “black” themes produced by mostly white writers dominated the discourse on Afro-Latin America, such as those involved in the *negrismo* movements of the early to mid-20th century. Until then, the auto-representation of blackness in Latin America, though prolific in example, had been obscured due to the perception that their works were not “universal” in the Western sense of the word. United States literary critics such as Richard L. Jackson, Marvin Lewis, and Ian Smart (from Trinidad and Tobago) are some of the early and principal contributors to scholarship on the poetics, aesthetics and literary representation of blackness in Spanish America. They are also the scholars who will introduce criticism and bibliographies of writers of self-identified African descent from the same region to an Anglophone public. For instance, Richard Jackson’s earlier literary criticism (*Black Writers in Latin America* and *The Black Image in Latin American Literature*) and his bibliographical compilations (*The Afro-Spanish American Author* in 1980 and *The Afro-Spanish American Author II: the 1980s* in 1989) provided prominent discussion and necessary visibility of writing

² The *Quilomboje* literary circle, based in São Paulo, is one such movement in Latin America. This group of Afro-Brazilian writers began a series of contemporary short story and poetry anthologies called *Cadernos Negros* in 1978, and continue to publish those collections today.

from and about Afro-Hispanics to an audience which was little aware of the existence of such literature. Lewis has provided extensive readings on Afro-Uruguayan literature and, most recently, that of Equatorial Guinea. In doing so, Lewis has carried out one of the first major projects in expanding discussion on Hispanophone to the continent of Africa. Ian Smart and Jonathan Tittler have provided access to several works from these writers in English through their translations of novels written by Afro-Latin American authors such as Zapata, Ortiz, and the Nelson Estupiñán Bass³. In this thesis, I turn my focus to two Afro-Hispanic writers who have since received much more attention for their literary production. Ecuador's Adalberto Ortiz, throughout his literary career, was known for his Afro-Hispanic *negrista* poetry and prose. His two most familiar works are his poem "Tierra, son y tambor" and his seminal novel *Juyungo*. Colombia's Manuel Zapata Olivella, also a doctor, anthropologist and ethnographer, was renowned earlier in his literary career for his regionalist/naturalist short stories and novels from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. His later work is mostly marked by his thematic focus on Afro-Colombia and Afro-America, starting with *Chambacú, corral de negros* and culminating in *Changó, el gran putas* (1983) and his autobiography *¡Levántate, mulato!*.

General Theoretical Framework

For a general theoretical framework, I turn to varying interpretations of transculturation, as well as ideas that have served to define the role of cross-cultural contact in a new geographic space. Given the socio-political nature of the literary works

³ Smart has translated Bass's *El último río (Pastrana's Last River)*. Tittler's translation work includes Ortiz's *Juyungo* (1982), as well as Zapata's *Chambacú, corral de negros (Chambacú, Black Slum- 1989)* and *Changó, el gran putas (Changó, the Biggest Badass- 2010)*

examined in this text, George Reid Andrew's *Afro-Latin America* will serve as a basic historical framework. The concept of transculturation has seen several variations and several similar ideas that pertain to a particular geographic, social, or cultural context. In the case of Fernando Ortiz, who coined the aforementioned phrase, transculturation is a basic term to describe the process of constant cultural exchange through economic or social discourse which functions multilaterally in the place of contact. For him, this in contrast to the North American concept of acculturation, a unilateral point of contact which sees the dominance of one cultural element over the subaltern factor (violent assimilation). He defines several subcategories that lead to the overall process of transculturation:

...el proceso (de la transculturación) implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una parcial *desculturación*, y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieron denominarse de *neoculturación*. (*Contrapunteo* 96)

These processes are constantly occurring, simultaneously affecting multiple cultures in the same geographical space of contact. Transculturation, as it is defined by Fernando Ortiz, is a multilateral cultural exchange that may involve all of the aforementioned processes either explicitly or subtly. This frequent cross-cultural configuration can also directly or indirectly affect law, determination of citizenship, religious practice, social classification, popular traditions, and intellectual production in a particular social or geographical space; transculturation, then, plays a prominent role in the process of nation-building and the development of a hegemonic discourse. There are scholars who

have discussed this relationship between transculturation, nation-building, and hegemony.

Ángel Rama, in *La ciudad letrada* (1984) and *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (1982), applied the concept of transculturation to the Eurocentric projects of “progress” and urbanization that became endemic in late 19th and early 20th-century Latin America and to the literary conflicts between regionalists/naturalists and Latin American vanguardists who were influenced by European letters. Manuel Zapata Olivella uses this concept to explore African and African-American cultural contacts in his collection of historical-mythic essays *El árbol brujo de la libertad: África en Colombia* (2002). It should be noted that US discourses on hybridity, while less frequent, did occur in the 19th and early 20th century⁴. For instance, in 1903, 37 years before Ortiz published *Contrapunteo cubano*, W.E.B DuBois’ *The Souls of Black Folk* is introduced to the US public. This text is of particular interest for my work since DuBois writes about what he calls the “double consciousness”, which he states that, “One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (DuBois 3). The aforementioned texts are essential to the basic framework of my argument since I will discuss the representations of transculturation, nation-building, and the idea of citizenship in the works of Adalberto Ortiz and Zapata with

⁴ While I understand that there are concerns regarding the application of North American discourse on race to a text about the representations of those issues in Latin American literary works, I opine that there are relevant US texts that discuss hybridity in the Americas. One of those is *The Souls of Black Folk*. I find it especially useful in my discussion of Juyungo’s protagonist Ascensión Lastre. Another clear example of US discussions of miscegenation as a potential future solution to race relations is the autobiography of Frederick Douglass.

approaches both common to and distinct from one another since the novels differ in scale and the use of certain forms of literary innovation. For example, while *Juyungo* seems to fall into the category of Ecuadorian social realism, it may serve me well to discuss the representation of a historical event such as the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border war in terms of its implications for Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous citizenship in the country which they represent, with broader comparisons to similar examples of that issue in another nation in the Americas. As for a work such as *Changó, el gran putas*, in which supernatural beings with very human qualities are as involved in cross-cultural contact and prolonged struggles for national and world recognition as citizens as their earthly combatants, I could question the ability of an *orisha* (and symbol of dissidence) such as Changó to maintain a presence in a region of the world in which there are constant attempts to erase him from cultural, political and religious spaces and how does he persist in such a vast geographic plane in the novel.

Synopses and Specific Critical Framework

In the second chapter, in which I elaborate on the representation of transculturation in several major and minor characters in Adalberto Ortiz's 1943 novel *Juyungo: historia de un negro, una isla y otros negros*, not only is it necessary to consider Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation, one should also understand a North American discussion of cultural hybridity that is conceived earlier in the 20th century by Afro-American intellectual WEB DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk*: the

“double consciousness”. That is, the notion of being American in a country where society at large never fully accepts blacks as such:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois 3).

In the case of Juyungo's protagonist, Ascensión Lastre, as well as his friends Antonio Angulo and Nelson Díaz, this question is especially relevant. The psychological burden of identifying as black or being identified as such while at the same time attempting to forge a place in a country that marks most Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples as second-class citizens becomes evident in cases distinct to each character. In the first section, I analyze how Lastre's social consciousness evolves through his life experiences, in which he takes up residence with an indigenous tribe, is confronted by endemic economic exploitation, exposed to new political ideologies, goes through relationships with women of the three principal ethnic groups, and fights in the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border war. The second section examines Nelson and Antonio's roles as intellectuals in relation to nation and race. The former, a light-skinned mulatto, attempts to carry out an egalitarian project yet, in some cases, explicitly questions the role of race in economic exploitation, nation building, and the composition of the frontline forces in the war against Peru⁵. Antonio, in order to understand the discrimination that he suffers in Ecuador and to affirm the hopelessness of his situation, uses his knowledge of Pan-

⁵ This brief war occurred and ended in 1941.

African sociology and history to draw comparisons to his own country's racial prejudice. In section three, chronicle, orality, and Ortiz's concept of neoculturation, or the creation of a new cultural element unique to a space of contact, are the points of departure. I am specifically interested in the following characters: Tripa Dulce, a black man who somehow has become a Cayapa priest, Crispulo Cangá, an associate of Ascensión who plays local "décimas" with "un inconfundible acento negroide" (*Juyungo* 137); and Don Clemente, a senior black man who is known for his anecdotes and story-telling skills, one of which seems to manifest itself in a scene which sees Lastre's life in danger. This section is of particular interest since little scholarship has been done on the role of these characters in the novel.

The third chapter, also divided into three parts, explores the process of literary transculturation in Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas* (1983). I argue in the first section of the chapter that Zapata's literary representation of Changó, just as the human characters and historical figures involved in the novel, goes through a cross-cultural transformation as a result of his constant involvement in liberation struggles in the Americas, regardless of how obvious or subtle his presence is. His transculturation occurs once he, along with his people, traverses the Atlantic Ocean into the Americas, thus making him no longer an African but an Afro-American. I also propose that Zapata's representation of Changó is perhaps more prepared for cultural survival than any other known form of the deity since he also manifests himself in places where he is least likely to appear (the Aztec pantheon, Evangelical Christianity, etc.). Through such a literary device, Zapata also links New-World blacks, whites and Native Americans to

common experiences of oppression, conflict and struggle, making this work a universal text. The second section deals with the recognition of black contribution in the Americas and stresses the role of Agne Brown, a major protagonist in the fifth part of *Changó*. Specifically, I analyze her conversations with the ancestral shadows of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois. These conversations, I argue, will be instrumental in countering public narratives and narrators that discredit and outright deny that Afro-descendants ever contributed to their respective national intellectual cultures in the Americas. I also discuss the instances in which the novel cites the non-recognition and vilification of the black soldiers and combatants who have often fought as frontline fighters for wars of independence, consolidation, and international scale in order to prove themselves worthy of citizenship in the Americas. Part Three's point of departure is the relationship between blacks and indigenous peoples in the Americas as represented in *Changó*. The presence of several narrative voices is also an important feature in this section of the novel; it is revealed that these exchanges these involved collaboration and others confrontation between the two cultures. I also argue that is necessary for Zapata to at times romanticize at least a few of the historical alliances cited in the novel as well as create a mythos to explain certain black-indigenous relationships (the creation of the Olmec civilization, for example) in order for his novel to function as a creative literary work.

As with Chapter 2, several critical works will provide a specific framework for my analysis. In the prologue of *El reino de este mundo*, Alejo Carpentier develops his concept of “lo real maravilloso”, or the idea that the miraculous has occurred through real

events or the ambiance of a new geographical or social space. Zapata seems to develop a variation of “lo real maravilloso” throughout *Changó*, which constantly involves the presence of the divine and marvelous in earthly struggle. Yvonne Captain-Hidalgo’s *The Culture of Fiction in the Works of Manuel Zapata Olivella* (1993) offers possibly the most in-depth literary criticism on this specific novel and the concept of Zapata’s *Changó*, in which she argues that the “African” god, in this case, is African-American. Antonio D. Tillis’ *Manuel Zapata Olivella and the Darkening of Latin American Literature* (2006) provides an extensive analysis of the tri-ethnic element in the same novel. William Luis’ introduction to the translation of *Changó (Changó, the Biggest Badass)* provides a further understanding of the use of time, space, and the narrative voice as a method of defying Western notions of the aforementioned concepts. Luis also introduces the idea of moving from West to East on the part of some of the “characters”. It also appears to me necessary to include scholarly studies historical, theological, and literary versions of *Changó* (Sango in English) in order to strengthen my discussion of Zapata’s representation of the deity. *Şàngó in Africa and the African Diaspora* (2009) will serve as that source of scholarship.

Chapter four is a comparative analysis of issues that I briefly discussed in either the first or second chapter, expanding on those ideas and how they are represented in both *Juyungo* and *Changó*, as well as *Chambacú, corral de negros*, an earlier Zapata Olivella novel (1963). In section one, for example, I return to the representation of the interracial relationship and what I call “reciprocated otherness”, which I define as a myth, stereotype, or fetish that is projected by the participating members of such a relationship

on one another. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* contains an analysis of both literary representations of the interracial relationship in French Antillean narrative. Claudette Williams's *Charcoal and Cinnamon* provides critical analysis of the portrayal of the black and mulatto woman's body and sensuality. These two works, however, seem to be relevant to the content of section one. Section two discusses the representation of the political national border as a questionable marker of common culture in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú*. *Nations and Nationalism*, an anthology which contains several theoretical essays on nation-building and citizenship, will provide a major critical framework in this section. I will also approach "literary transculturation" in relation to the possible stylistic and thematic influences of twentieth-century Mexican literature on the Mexican Revolution in Ortiz's and Zapata's works, particularly Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*. Upon reading two of Zapata Olivella's critical essays on *Los de abajo*, I found it appropriate to define "literary transculturation" not only as the representation of cross-cultural contacts within a fictional narrative, but also the influences that writers from distinct cultural and geographic spaces have on each other. I also consider it useful to discuss the use of the intellectual/soldier archetype in Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (a novel on which Zapata commented in the 1960s and 1970s) and an earlier Zapata novel, *Chambacú, corral de negros*, in relation to those present in *Juyungo* and *Changó*. This novel is a relevant item of conversation since, as in the two works that I have already cited, there is a constant representation of the literary "other" as not only a victim but an agent of revolution and struggle for citizenship. Concerning the representation of the Pan African experience, I elaborate on the use of

particular characters, literary structure, and intertextuality by Ortiz and Zapata in terms of their specific literary innovations. Lastly, I will provide special mention to my recent research of Manuel Zapata Olivella's archives and my thoughts as to how some of his past scholarly experiences and early *Changó* manuscripts may relate to the development of the final draft of that novel. I follow up this Chapter with the conclusion of the thesis, which also contains a reflection of my personal experiences with questions of citizenship, nationality, and race.

As I mentioned, *Juyungo* and *Changó* require much different critical approaches from one another, although both works employ similar literary devices (realism, historical and Pan-African references, etc.). Both works highlight questions of citizenship, the hybrid state of Americans of African descent, and their roles in the multiple imagined states of the New World. As one novel literally attempts to transcend national borders (*Changó*), *Juyungo* succeeds in representing Pan-American commonalities by centering on a seemingly national/local problem that can be easily related to concerns outside of Ecuadorian borders. Since *Changó* seems to resemble works that are associated more with the genre of Marvelous Realism, it will be necessary to comment on the involvement of the supernatural in the Pan-American struggles of the work's protagonists. This, in my judgment, is a much less necessary step in my discussions of *Juyungo*. In any case, my overall project is to attempt to demonstrate how these two authors represent transculturation, nation-building, and the question of citizenship in the Americas through their literary texts.

CHAPTER II

LIFE, EDUCATION, AND SOUL: REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRO-ECUADORIAN TRANSCULTURAL EVOLUTION IN *JUYUNGO*

Juyungo (1943) was published in the late 1930s and early 1940s, a period in Ecuador in which the *indigenista*, social realist, and social protest novel became popular among national authors. The action is mostly located in Quito, where oligarchies continued to be prominent and the majority of the exploited population was indigenous. *Juyungo* has been read as a text that is analogous to those such as Jorge Icaza's *Huasipungo*, one of the most well-known of the Ecuadorian *indigenista* novels. Richard L. Jackson, in *Black Writers in Latin America* (1979) has noted that one of *Juyungo*'s main distinctions from those *indigenista* works outside of the centering the novel on the mostly Afro-Ecuadorian province of Esmeraldas is the portrayal of the black characters as agents of activism⁶. Fernando Balseca highlights *Juyungo*'s constant questioning of "nationality" and the representation of Ecuador as a fragmented social space which happens to have a political border. I propose that this reevaluation and redefinition of the "national" and "national citizen" are represented in *Juyungo* by Lastre's frequent and prolonged cross-cultural contact and his resultant evolution of his social consciousness.

⁶ I also would like to note another prominent Afro-Ecuadorian writer, Nelson Estupiñán Bass. Two of his most well-known works is the social-realist novel *Cuando los guayacanes florecían*, which takes place during the Conchista uprisings in Esmeraldas, and *El último río*, whose main character, José Antonio Pastrana, rises to financial and political power and begins to hate his own race, as well as whites, upon achieving this upward mobility.

The presence of the activist Nelson Díaz and the nihilist Antonio Angulo, two mixed-race intellectuals of African descent who use their talents to push for social reform or to prove the hopelessness of the subaltern, respectively, are major components to Lastre's development of social consciousness and are at the same time individuals coping with the contradictions of their projects and ideologies. The portrayal of several secondary characters (Cástulo Cahingre, Clemente Ayoví, Tripa Dulce, Crispulo Cangá) as symbols of coastal Ecuador's diverse and hybrid cultural production is a factor in the novel that I opine should not be overlooked, since these characters not only represent links between the African, Amerindian and European contact, but also an important relationship with neighboring Colombia.

Lastre Rising: Ascensión's Evolution Towards Tri-Ethnic and Social Consciousness

Juyungo: historia de un negro, una isla y otros negros, a novel by Ecuadorian writer and poet Adalberto Ortiz (1914-2003), was originally published in 1943 in Buenos Aires, two years after a brief border war between Ecuador and Peru. Ortiz was raised in the coastal region of Ecuador, an area with a large Afro-Ecuadorian population, in addition to indigenous, mestizos and whites. The region also suffered endemic poverty and economic exploitation. This work is a social commentary on these racial and economic tensions during the early 20th century (the late 1920s to the early 1940s). Though this novel goes short of portraying coastal Ecuador as a social utopia and the protagonist, Ascención Lastre, as one who establishes complete racial-national equilibrium, I do argue that it represents the transcultural evolution of the aforementioned

character. Lastre, a young black who runs away from his father and stepmother, undergoes this process as a result of his lived experiences while travelling and coming into contact with characters that, in some cases, also achieve a more profound social consciousness. His travels, conflicts, and friendships represent both Afro-Ecuadorian and Pan Afro-American questions of racial solidarity and national belonging. For instance, Ascensión experiences social marginalization that, at first, he perceives as exclusively a racial issue. He progressively revises his worldview during his stay with an indigenous tribe, contacts with several new people and politics on the work camp “Kilómetro 18”, his interracial marriage, and his experience in the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border war. He learns to negotiate his racial and national status while coming to terms with the contradictions of his separatist ideology.

Fleeing from a diet of iguana soup, rampant poverty, an abusive stepmother and an attempted conversion by “el hombre vestido de mujer” (a priest), Ascensión, at a very young age, acquaints himself with an old bootlegger, Cástulo Canchingre, with whom he stays and travels to and from Colombia for two or three years. Ascensión’s time with Cástulo is brief since two Colombian contrabandists murder the latter, leaving Lastre an orphan once again. This event leads young Lastre to solicit the help of the local Cayapa tribe. The transition is neither easy nor results in a utopic relationship between the two parties. This tribe has a particular label for blacks: “juyungo”, which translates to “demon” or “beast” in the Cayapa language. Nevertheless, the self-proclaimed “governor” of the Cayapas, who is described by the narrator as a man that “vestía casi a la manera de los blancos,” decides that Lastre may live among them due to his accounting

skills; the sentiment of the rest of the tribe is not entirely a welcoming one as the narrator cites his age as a factor in being allowed to stay. The nature of this exchange is debatable. Was the acceptance of Lastre simply an act of economic exploitation or also a display of empathy? A third party may provide more clarity to this question: the “cayapa” witchdoctor Tripa Dulce, a black man later recognized by Lastre as the contrabandist who killed Cástulo, appears to have been living amongst the Cayapa tribe for a prolonged period of time and has enjoyed a much more positive reception from the locals than Ascensión. Tripa Dulce’s role in this section of the novel is, as the death ritual scene, a little-scrutinized subject on which I elaborate later⁷.

In spite of the ambivalent local attitudes towards Ascensión, he does benefit from his experience with the tribe. Here, “el idioma cayapa se metió en el cuerpo, como aire de la mañana” and “aprendió a labrar finas canoas, batear para lavar, azafates de moler maíz, molinillos para batir chocolate y otros utensilios” (101). As Ascensión goes through this process of self-construction, the narrator suggests that, “tal vez remotísimos ancestros africanos vivían sumidos en la oscuridad de su espíritu, o quizá era que estaba pronto a sucumbir a su propia novelería negra” (101), seemingly indicating parallels between Lastre’s indigenous cultural experience to one resembling his obscure ancestral culture. As for his inclusion into the indigenous cultural space, he becomes increasingly curious about one particular tradition: the burial ritual. He witnesses a Cayapa funeral in which Francisco, the man for which it is held, is buried with a plethora of food, an

⁷ I elaborate on Tripa Dulce’s role in a section of my thesis entitled “Tripa Dulce, Cástulo, Clemente, and Cangá: Cultural Performance, Orality, and *Marimba* as Non-Secondary Cultural Elements”

amount to the likes Lastre had yet to enjoy in his lifetime. Ascensión subsequently asks one of the villagers about whether he will also one day be buried in a similar ritual. The answer he receives marks him clearly as non-indigenous: “No. Donde entierra cayapa, no entierra juyungo” (100). As I will demonstrate later in my analysis of the war segment of the novel, the value of this seldom-studied scene cannot be underestimated. Another factor in Lastre’s development is the first of three relationships with female figures representing Ecuador’s tri-ethnic paradigm: that with an indigenous girl named Pancha⁸. I emphasize the term “love interest” since, through his later encounter with the white woman María, it becomes evident Lastre treats such contacts with women of a perceived privilege as sexual conquests while he demonstrates more initial respect for the women of the other two ethnic groups⁹. His relationship with Pancha does not last, however, as the Cayapa Indians seem to increasingly distance their selves from Ascensión as he grows in age. I go into further detail on the implications Lastre’s exchange with Panchita as an essential step in establishing a tri-ethnic consciousness in a later segment¹⁰. The next stage of Lastre’s development, that is, his reinforced ideology on race and class, occurs upon meeting yet another father figure, the travelling salesman Manuel Remberto Quiñonéz¹¹. The experience of seeing Manuel Remberto work himself literally to death, coupled with his failed attempt to discourage the peons from believing the government’s

⁸ Later, I will analyze Lastre’s symbolic achievement of Ecuadorian citizenship through his relationships with women of Amerindian, African, and European ancestry, respectively.

⁹ Lastre, throughout the novel, demonstrates tri-ethnic love through three relationships: one with Panchita (indigenous), another with the teacher Afrodita (black), and his last, although more debatable, María (white). I will go further into detail about the importance of these women in a separate section.

¹⁰ See “Pancha, Afrodita, and María: Representations of Tri-Ethnic Love”

¹¹ Manuel, like Cástulo, plays a father-figure role Lastre, a constant guacho (orphan). Nevertheless, he is forced into an absentee role in relation to his own family as a result of the travel demands of his work. I would like to further study this guacho-father figure-guacho paradigm later.

empty promises, will reinforce Lastre's outrage with the economic exploitation of blacks in Ecuador. This resentment towards whites enhances upon evoking images of his uncle, Commander Lastre, who was humiliated and killed afterwards for his participation in the Conchista revolution against the government¹². The primary site of this exploitation, Kilómetro 18, will also be the place where Ascensión will meet new people, ally and adversary, who will further raise his consciousness as both a man of African descent and an Ecuadorian.

Here, Lastre will meet three people who profoundly impact his life: Nelson Díaz, Antonio Angulo, and María de los Ángeles Caicedo. They, together, will affect the racial and social worldview of Lastre, a man who, while once living amongst an indigenous tribe, still perceives blacks as the most subjugated people in his country. In this case, I will focus on, Díaz's political philosophy and Angulo's Pan-African historical aptitude and their combined influence on the aforementioned character. Ascensión's eventual marriage to María forces a reevaluation of his relationship with her; initially, she is to Lastre a symbol of sexual and racial conquest.

The consistent occurrence of social activism and subversive political activity amongst the black and Amerindian workers is one the major events that provokes Ascensión's interests in combating racial discrimination. The individual who is significantly responsible for his newfound desire to protest such prejudice is, ironically, a

¹² Concha, a protégé of the liberal politician Eloy Alfaro, led a revolt against the federal government that began in 1914 in which the majority of the fighters were blacks from the Esmeraldas province. The nature of this rebellion apparently carried strong racial overtones. This uprising would eventually be put down by the federal forces.

light-skinned mulatto who passes for white: Nelson Díaz. Ascensión's first encounter with Nelson occurs during a worker's revolt in which the participants protest against the central government and demand basic utilities such as "agua potable, luz eléctrica y caminos, nada más" (*Juyungo* 128). These protests soon result in a violent response by the government forces; among the protesters is Ascensión. While fighting, Ascensión notices a "jovencito de piel lavada" (*Juyungo* 128) aiding him against the federal soldiers, who later introduces himself as the same Díaz. The presence of an "almost white" ally instantly provokes personal reevaluation of his sociopolitical ideology. Later, returning from Quito after six years of studies that end abruptly upon carrying out student protests and his resultant arrest, Díaz reunites with Lastre and utters the words which will have the most sweeping impact with the latter: his proclamation that the rampant exploitation in Ecuador is a struggle of "más que raza, es la clase" (*Juyungo* 164). Although Lastre contemplates his worldview as a result of Díaz's utterance, he still carries doubts about the overall local and national status of blacks. The legacy of racial caste systems in Ecuador and Spanish America in general is still prominent, framing blacks and Indians primarily as an underclass, with few exceptions. In some cases, "class" and "race" are interchangeable concepts, at times undermining Nelson's idea. For example, later in the novel, Señor Valdez, a local politician, declares that Ecuador should consider an increase in European immigration so that the nation can "better the race". Max Ramírez, another light-skinned mulatto, concurs with this idea and responds that blacks are lazy and incapable of contributing anything of value to Ecuador. Antonio Angulo, another man of mixed race, also contradicts Díaz's egalitarian claims to Lastre. He is at the same time

partly responsible for engendering Ascensión's consciousness as a man of African descent as a result of his extensive academic knowledge of Pan-African social issues.

Antonio, a "zambo" who accompanies Nelson Díaz, also studied in Quito until he was expelled. While he demonstrates a substantial knowledge of Pan-African history and sociology Antonio, ironically, he is the same person who possibly feels the strongest inferiority complex in the novel. His role as Lastre's "teacher" of his African roots is significant since the aforementioned character, although he is well aware of his condition as a black in Ecuador, knows little of where his distant ancestors arrived:

Una cosa que siempre me ha llamao la atención es porqué habemos tanta gente morena por estos lados.
Porque, según cuentan, hace ya mucho tiempo, allá por el año 1553, frente a las costas de Esmeraldas, naufragó un barco negrero que llevaba veintitrés esclavos negros y negras los cuales aprovecharon el momento para ganar tierra e internarse en estas montañas. Otros aseguran que los esclavos se sublevaron, y acabando con la tripulación encallaron la nave y saltaron. (*Juyungo* 268-9)

That is, he has no idea of his African lineage; Antonio refers to a continent lost to Ascensión's memory, and to many blacks in the New World. Through Angulo's explanation of the history of black populations in Ecuador and Colombia, Lastre re-discovers his ancestry in a manner that I will term retro-transcultural¹³. That is, his identity moves in a west-east trajectory; he is primarily Ecuadorian by birth and land and

¹³ I define retro-transculturation in this sense as an educational, nostalgic, or symbolic trip (Afro-Americans who settled in Liberia and black Canadians who did the same in Sierra Leone, for example) to an ancestral culture in an attempt (successful or unsuccessful) to regain a sense of consciousness of the same. As a black Ecuadorian who has gone through a cultural hybridization in the Americas, he comes into contact with an ancestral culture that is alien from his own and can therefore never be completely African. Such a process results in a mythical or verisimilar imagining of the ancestral culture, such as the earlier scene which describes Lastre's development of survival skills during his stay with the Cayapa tribe and Angulo's didacticism.

African by memory and ancestry in this order. It seems that, although the awareness of his African ancestry is important for him as far as resolving the question of his distant past, the current situation of his Ecuadorian blackness is more relevant to his survival in his place of birth, as with blacks throughout the Americas. In addition to this information, Angulo seems to express a subtle militant sentiment in the last line of this segment, an example of the subversive activity in which he and Díaz participated. Yet still, Ascensión, despite not having this academic knowledge on Africa, appears to be far more comfortable with his racial identity than Angulo. Ironically, despite his academic adeptness and revolutionary rhetoric, the latter sees little hope for the future of Afro-Ecuadorians. Later in the novel, he will be the first among his compatriots to die in a much-debated representation of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian war. Nevertheless, I will depart from this point of the novel until the segment that follows the next one, in which I elaborate more on the roles that three women from unique racial and ethnic backgrounds play in Lastre's social and cultural evolution.

Doris Sommer, in "Irresistible romance: the Foundational Fictions of Latin America"¹⁴, defines nineteenth century Latin American romances as "stories of star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, or economic interests which should naturally come together" (*Nation and Narration* 75). She argues that "part of the conjugal romance's national project, perhaps the main part, is to produce legitimate citizens, literally to engender civilization" (*Nation and Narration* 86). Often, such

¹⁴ I will cite any quotes from this specific essay under the name Nations and Narrations since it was among those included in the compilation *Nations and Narrations*, edited by Homi K. Bhabha.

projects of citizenship involve miscegenation between white men and women of color (*mulatas*, Amerindians, *mestizas*, and, less likely, black women) or ideological whitening. Almost never in such romances do those realizations of citizenship occur between men of color (especially blacks) and white women, since the latter often embodied the ideals of the nations (purity, civilization, the object to be protected, etc.). In either case, female characters in these literary works often seem to be agents/victims of citizenship/unattainable citizenship (women of color) or symbolic of the nation (white women). However, men of color (particularly “pure” black males) are either perceived threats to the nation or incapable of earning national citizenship through such symbolic love. Ascensión Lastre’s relationships with three women of Amerindian, African, and European ancestry appears to be a counterpoint to those ideologies. I propose that, similarly to how symbolic citizenship is written in the nineteenth-century romances, Lastre seems to gain his through his love for women who represent the three primary ethnic groups in Ecuador. Just as the female body is portrayed as an agent of citizenship or national ideal, Ascensión’s relationships with Pancha, Afrodita, and María seem to serve as gradual steps towards gaining his spiritual citizenship as an Ecuadorian as each of these characters awaken distinct elements of his social and cultural consciousness.

With the exception of María Caecido, Lastre’s eventual wife, the women in Ascensión Lastre’s life occupy little textual space in *Juyungo* and therefore are seldom a subject of critical analysis in this novel. Because of Pancha and Afrodita’s comparative brevity of character development in relation to María, much less, if any, critical analysis of Lastre’s first two relationships is available. The main points of investigation for María

have been her interracial sexual relationship with Ascensión and her insanity after the loss of their son¹⁵. Richard L. Jackson reads Ascensión's relationship with María as one that maintains a stigma of sexual and racial conquest, even after the two are married. I differ from this opinion as I perceive that the relationship, despite the fact that Ascensión and María express ambivalent attitudes towards each other, does evolve into something more than sexual curiosity. I also propose that the presence of Pancha, an indigenous girl, and Afrodita, his black love interest, carry a strong enough impact on Lastre's overall development to warrant more than simple mention. In this section, I explore the roles of all three women as validations of Lastre's development of a tri-ethnic consciousness. As already mentioned, I also discuss how Ascensión seems to establish a symbolic citizenship in Ecuador through his relationships with these three women.

As Lastre becomes an adolescent, during his stay with the Cayapa Indians "renació la hostilidad del principio, lo mismo que yerba mala. Los cayapas no querían tolerar más al juyungo" (*Juyungo*106). This hostility only intensifies when the "witch doctor" Tripa Dulce, the only black tolerated (or feared) in the village, pressures the daughter of one of the village's residents into marriage. The village noticeably distances itself from Ascensión. There seems to be a strong distrust of blacks in the tribe due to a perception that they are either hostile or tricksters. The term "juyungo", as I mentioned earlier, is used to describe a demonic creature with dark skin. It is possible that this tribe believes itself to be literally raising a small monster with a proverbial short fuse. This

¹⁵ Heanon M. Wilkins (1995) analyzes María's relationship with Cristobolina, a black woman and widow who is often presented as androgynous and even asexual. Cristobolina is the person who cares for María once she succumbs to the psychological trauma of having lost her son in a fire set by Ascensión's archenemy Cocambo and other men who are on Señor Valdez's payroll.

moniker may also have much to do with the local reputation of blacks as relentless warriors as a result of their previous bouts with the federal government (the Concha uprising) and their initially hostile encounters with Amerindians upon marching through the jungles to escape slavery. Franklin Miranda, in *Hacia una narrativa afroecuatoriana*, also points out how “juyungo” becomes a term of endearment used by Lastre’s close friends to describe his overwhelming strength and resolve. There is also a point in *Juyungo* that cites Lastre’s resentment for the use of the term “negro” to refer to him in a negative light and his more positive reception of the same word when it is used by his friends. Both words seem to be portrayed as divisive terms that are analogous to using the North American term “nigger”. His relationship with this tribe of course, although he learns significant lessons in survival and self-sufficiency during his stay, has never been strong. It is not until he meets Pancha that he feels a meaningful connection with the human element of the Cayapas. He manages to establish acceptance from this indigenous girl despite the fact that “casi no hablaban, no sabían qué decirse” (106). The few verbal exchanges that are referenced between Lastre and the tribe deal with exploitation (el Gobernador, Tripa Dulce), death (the indigenous man who responds to Lastre’s question about his own burial), and distance (the indigenous man’s response: “donde entierra cayapa, no entierra juyungo”) (*Juyungo* 100). While the few scenes that pertain to the contact between Lastre and Pancha seem to describe sexual curiosity, such as the scene in which “él dejaba correr sus manos ávidas y torpes por aquellos senos erectos y cobrizos y, luego, entre los quites y risas de la otra, buscaba otras partes” (106), he still achieves an exchange between a black and indigenous person in an environment where such

communication is rare. The most frequent representations of black-indigenous contact occur through the intervention of a figure of power (Tripa Dulce) or as a commercial exchange (Manuel Remberto, el Gobernador). Whereas the black witchdoctor Tripa Dulce exploits his ill-gotten space of power in order to maintain his relationship with the Cayapas and solicit his marriage to one of the indigenous girls, Ascensión manages what he is incapable of, even without Tripa Dulce's perceived power: an organic and bilateral dialogue with a Cayapa woman. The narrator also suggests that Pancha is the sole reason that he would consider staying in the village after being asked by Manuel Remberto to travel with him:

Lastre no se hizo rogar mucho. Estaba deseando salir de allí. No podría permanecer más. Solamente le dolía el abandonar a Panchita, que, a lo mejor quedaba preñada, la pobre. Pero no la podía llevar consigo; ni la tribu, ni el dueño de la canoa se lo permitirían. (*Juyungo* 106)

Considering Lastre's sentiments of solidarity with the indigenous populations, especially during his time in the Ecuadorian-Peruvian War¹⁶, it seems that his stay with the Cayapas was not exactly a positive one, save for the lifetime skills that he develops. What, then, motivates Lastre to establish such a connection with the indigenous soldiers later on in the novel? Some would argue that Nelson Díaz's egalitarian utterance "más que raza, es la clase" carries some clue into Lastre's ambition to recognize his commonalities with those soldiers. For example, Franklin Miranda cites the Marxist ideological trajectory towards which the novel seems to lean in an attempt to represent the unity of subjugated

¹⁶ I attempt to go into further detail about the impact that Lastre's participation in the border war has on his desire to forge a solidarity with his fellow indigenous soldiers in a later section of this text.

peoples of African, Amerindian, and European ancestry against economic exploitation¹⁷. While this is a compelling point, I propose that Lastre's encounter with Pancha has very much to do with the solidarity that he expresses with the indigenous soldiers on the battlefield. For instance, consider his next two relationships with Afrodita and María. They both, as I will discuss in more detail later in this section, profoundly factor into the evolution of his social consciousness. Afrodita, a black teacher, is responsible for his new appreciation of his own blackness while his relationship with María challenges him to reevaluate his understanding of power relations and race. In the case of Pancha, it is fitting that the first of his love interests is an individual who is indigenous to the Americas. His contentious stay with the Cayapas and his ability to eventually win over an Amerindian's admiration are symbolic of the convoluted relationship between blacks and indigenous peoples represented in *Juyungo*¹⁸. Ascensión and Pancha's short relationship at least demonstrates a potential for Afro-Ecuadorians and Amerindians to discover commonalities and establish relationships with each other that are neither forced nor ambiguous. Lastre's expression of lament for leaving Pancha behind seemingly trumps any hard feelings that he and the Cayapa Indians had toward each other and may have even positively changed his mind about them. At no other point in the novel (outside of his solidarity with the indigenous soldiers and his appreciation for the animal tracking skills that the Cayapa Indians taught him) does he express such a profound and

¹⁷ Richard Jackson offers a counterpoint to Nelson's proclamation (and Ortiz's attempt at representing the egalitarian). He points out the lack of white soldiers fighting on the frontlines in the war chapter.

¹⁸ Miranda considers the relationship between the Afro-Ecuadorians and Amerindians portrayed in *Juyungo* as one of coexistence, not *mestizaje*. The novel seems to constantly challenge the notion of cultural and national utopia through its frequent displays of fragmentary relationships between the African, Amerindian, and European Ecuadorians.

overt connection to indigenous people. Ascensión's relationship with Pancha will not be the last time that a female has such an impact on his development as a human being and his social evolution.

Afrodita, a rural school teacher whom Ascensión meets after a hostile encounter with a corrupt clergy member, is the woman who reinforces his pride in being black and is a person who has a social consciousness similar to his. Upon introducing herself, she tells the story behind the crooked Hermanito:

...Pues, sí señor. El tal Hermanito no es más que un bandido. Yo había ido allá por acompañar a mi tía, no porque creo en esas majaderías, sino que habemos todavía negros zoquetes¹⁹, eso es. Él a mí no me tragaba porque no quise peinarlo. No ve que a todas las que lo peinan, él se las come. (*Juyungo* 117)

She then mentions that he was a Colombian who was saved from a catastrophic earthquake that occurred when she was not yet born²⁰. Afrodita, through this anecdote, establishes a parallel between her experiences with crooks-turned-religious figures, and Lastre's own conflicts with such people (the priest who attempts to baptize him and Tripa Dulce). She is one of the first people in Lastre's life who demonstrates a fervent desire for social justice and reinforces his specific concerns with the exploitation of the Afro-Ecuadorian population. Arguably, Afrodita, not Nelson Díaz, is the first person to raise

¹⁹ If Nelson Díaz's political stance is "más que raza, es la clase" is to be taken seriously in this novel, there are some questions that must be asked (and I ask some of those later): in this novel, there have been two major cases of exploitation at the hands of religious figures in the black and indigenous communities. I opine that this paradigm would have possibly made Díaz's case somewhat stronger had there also been a scene in which poor whites were also being exploited by such and institution.

²⁰ The number of connections to Colombia in *Juyungo* is intriguing. Along with el Hermanito, Tripa Dulce and Cástulo have either lived or frequently travelled to that country. Later, when Angulo narrates the possible history of the Esmeraldan blacks, he makes it a case to mention Colombia as a steady source of the province's (and Ecuador's) black populations.

Ascensión's social consciousness and sense of justice. Lastre also seems to be impressed with the fact that he has found, for once, a black school teacher, "color poco visto entre maestras de escuela" (Juyungo 118-9). The narrator also puts Afrodita in a decidedly positive light, as she is described teaching with "textos de lectura ya pasados" (*Juyungo* 119) and to a diverse crowd of rural men, women and children. Despite the obvious lack of resources and a less than modest salary, Afrodita continues to educate her students with a display of conviction that Ascensión admires well after breaking off his relationship with her. In fact, when his future wife María reveals that she is pregnant, he hopes that, if he has a daughter, she will become a school teacher like Afrodita when she grows up. This woman bolsters Lastre's sense of pride of being both black and Ecuadorian because her contributions are of the utmost importance to her country, despite a lack of support by her government or national elites. Afrodita, who shares the name of the Greek goddess of love and, at the same time, also contains in her name the suffix that refers to things African, is a fitting of black love and solidarity for Lastre, and ironically represents one of his major disappointments in the novel after she is forced to break up with him in order to keep her job. She, as Pancha appears to have done, establishes a special place in Lastre's memory. Ascensión, for the first time, sees an undeniably positive black community role model who invests substantial energy working in substandard conditions for people who have already scant access to basic human needs such as medical care (documented by Manuel Remberto's death as a result of a medicine man's failed attempts at treating him for illness), housing, and educational facilities. He also sees that this black educator is carrying the burden of poverty even despite her

undertaking of a major social responsibility. Such an observation shapes Lastre's heightened sense of black identity.

Ascensión's next (and last) relationship does not arrive to such simple terms of mutual respect in the beginning and is by far the most ambivalent of the three. His sexual encounter with María, unlike those with Afrodita and Panchita, is treated as a sign of racial domination and humiliation. For Ascensión, a consensual sex act with a white woman is the ultimate demonstration of black power in which his personal and racial battles culminate²¹. White women, throughout the colonial and post-independence periods of the Americas, North and South, had been a dogmatic symbol of purity and ultimate beauty that was supposedly inaccessible for black men, especially poor blacks and slaves, through legislation or threats of violence. As I mentioned earlier, quite often in discourses concerning the emerging nation, the white female body has been utilized as a symbol of national ideals/civilization whereas black males (especially after the Haitian Revolution) are perceived as a threat to "contaminate" or assault "her". Lastre's sexual encounter and the imagery of his family's history on the battlefield appear to undermine this paradigm. His sexual conquest of María once again evokes the images of Ascensión's famous uncle, a soldier who mounted a symbolic white horse which was the point of reference in his phrase "estoy montao sobre la raza blanca". If María is perceived by Lastre as a symbol of ultimate beauty and national privilege, then the narrator provides at least one detail that questions this imagined perfection. The narrator juxtaposes Lastre's physical description with María's, "este negro alto y fuerte, de

²¹ Frantz Fanon, in his 1952 sociological commentary *Black Skin, White Masks*, explores the issue of interracial relationships in-depth, with an analysis of such contacts in relation to gender.

diáfana risa y dientes perfectos, a diferencia de los suyos” (*Juyungo* 140-1). This appears to me to be an image of an individual that has often been depicted in Latin American romantic literature as repugnant (a black male) who has a curiosity for an imperfect body that supposedly represents the pinnacle of the national ideal of perfection (in this case, María de los Ángeles Caecido). María seems to be the embodiment, in this case, of Ecuador’s imperfections and the love and curiosity that “true” Ecuadorians, such as Lastre, still have for the nation despite its flaws.

This display of sexual curiosity and conquest seems to become something particularly meaningful after Lastre spends more time with María and eventually marries her. The words of Nelson Díaz (“más que raza, es la clase”) and his marriage with María, force Lastre to reevaluate his ideas about race and class since he has an ally in Díaz who could have easily “classed out” of his blackness and a wife who could have just as easily kept her sexual encounter with him secret by leaving him. This is not to say, however, that Ascensión becomes less weary of the outcome for blacks in his country. In fact, Lastre reflects on another element that appears to compliment race: gender. This issue stands out particularly when he discovers that María is pregnant with his child, which he initially believes is a girl. The couple has differing opinions about the future of the daughter which they expect to raise. As María champions the idea of this child becoming a nun, Lastre emphasizes that “mejor es que se haga maestra de escuela, pa que enseñe a leé y a escribí—y por mente pasó fugaz el recuerdo de Afrodita. Nada había vuelto a saber de ella” (*Juyungo* 219). Lastre draws from his personal experiences with economic exploitation and poverty as well as his decidedly positive encounter with black love

Afrodita, Nelson Díaz's social justice, and the basic education that Cápsulo once offered him. For Ascensión, this daughter can be a vector of education for blacks and mulattoes. She would be able to provide them with a framework to fight exploitation and discrimination, instill them with a sense of pride, and assist them in developing an enhanced voice in discourses concerning the sociopolitical direction of Ecuador. It is no surprise that he evokes the image of Afrodita, symbol of racial solidarity and love. Due to his negative encounters with organized religion and the immediate necessity to quell socioeconomic inequality, he sees little value in sending his daughter to a convent. For all the projections of his child's future, he ends up facing an unexpected, and apparently unwanted, circumstance: "Era que nació un machito y no una hembra, como había pensado. Y sin ser supersticioso, pensó que algo malo le iba a suceder, porque la naturaleza les había fallado." (*Juyungo* 287). Lastre, having seen almost exclusively black, male figures in his life die or face economic hardship, could not have demanded a worse scenario. Two of his closest male friends, Cápsulo and Manuel Remberto Quiñónez, had both succumbed to extremely dangerous and demanding labor that either prevented them from having a family (Cápsulo) or had broken one (Manuel's travelling sales) and resulted in their deaths. Essentially, Lastre sees his son's birth as an imminent funeral. This reaction engenders another question: if Lastre completely agreed with Díaz's claim that socioeconomic class is a stronger factor of discrimination than race, why does he still seem to be as concerned over the suffering that his son will endure as what he went through? Racial stratification in Spanish and Portuguese America, as I already mentioned, began as a system in which class was directly linked to the color of

one's skin. That is, a "pure black" or "pure Indian", especially males, stood little chance of gaining access to material goods, education, and higher socioeconomic standing. Mulattos and mestizos, at least, stood a slightly higher chance of realizing the same opportunities because of their European ancestry, especially if he or she were the product of a white male of the upper class. It appears that, in Lastre's mind, had his child been a mulatto and educated female, would be able to avoid the physical labor that he and many of his friends, both men and women, have had to endure. Unfortunately for him, his prediction becomes a reality, as his son is the victim of a house fire caused by his enemies, orchestrated by Señor Váldez and carried out by Cocambo (Lastre's arch nemesis), upon carrying out a takeover of Don Clemente's lands. He subsequently loses María to *locura*. Ascensión ends up joining the Ecuadorian army, along with Díaz and Angulo, in order to fight in the escalating border conflict with Peru. This section of *Juyungo* possibly the most discussed point in the novel as a result of the controversial ending, culminating in Lastre's death and Díaz's survival. One of the most frequent questions about this chapter is whether or not Ascensión becomes a symbol of patriotism and proves himself worthy of citizenship in Ecuador.

The tendency to read the chapter "Negro entre indios" as a demonstration of Lastre's patriotism²² has recently come under scrutiny, particularly in the introduction of a 2006 edition of the novel and by Richard Jackson. While I agree that this interpretation

²² Jackson, in *Black Writers in Latin America* (1979), argues that "Lastre is an admirable hero who in the end seemingly embodies a national ideal—patriotism", although he also opines that the novel's ending, which results in the protagonist's death, is problematic. Jackson proposes that, far more than patriotism, a much stronger motive is the maintenance of the honor and heroism that the Lastre surname represents. The latter seems to me a valid interpretation. While I do not necessarily perceive Ascensión's death as a symbol of patriotism, I do argue that the same is an embodiment of black and indigenous solidarity.

is problematic, I propose an alternative: Lastre's death culminates the process of becoming culturally African, indigenous²³, and perhaps an Ecuadorian manifestation of what José Martí calls the "natural man" in his essay "Nuestra América". He fights alongside hundreds of thousands of Indians, mestizos, and blacks who all struggle for national belonging in a country that has not considered the interests of the same. There is also a more subtle manner in which Lastre achieves this cultural transformation: Lastre appears to carry out a death ritual resembling that of the indigenous man he saw buried during his stay with the Cayapa Indians. As mentioned, Ascensión witnesses a dead man buried with more food than he has consumed in his entire lifetime. Lastre wonders about his own possible burial and one of the indigenous men responds that the former will not have such a ritual to commemorate his death since he is not a member of said ethnic group. I propose that this death ritual impacts the protagonist substantially when one considers the prominence of such events in the novel and the fact that this particular funeral is one of the few which is not associated with a horrific end to a loved one's life as well as a display of the abundance for which he aspires. I return to the scene of Lastre's demise. Upon deciding to invade a Peruvian encampment to steal food, he kills several soldiers and afterwards eats a recently slaughtered hog in order to quell his starvation. He is subsequently shot down by Peruvian soldiers and dies. The aforementioned scenes both involve three major themes: lineage, abundance, and belonging. In the case of the Cayapa funeral, Lastre is an outsider welcomed in the

²³ The Spanish element of this tri-ethnic paradigm is noticeably absent in this chapter, as most of the Ecuadorian armed forces are composed of Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous men. Also, Lastre has lost his mulatto son to a tragic attack on the island Peperán and as a result his wife María becomes insane. Nelson, the physically "white" mulatto, seemingly self-identifies as black.

villaged only as a result of his youth (and utility for “el gobernador”). Lastre’s own death has a double function: he dies fulfilling the standard of the Lastre name as well as manages not only to satisfy his hunger but perish amongst indigenous soldiers.

As far as his racial and national status, the implications of his death are significant for several other reasons. He perishes in a war with few or no direct benefits to the majority of the Ecuadorian soldiers. In addition, Lastre becomes part of a long list of black fighters sent to the frontlines of American wars of nation-building and territorial consolidation (the Argentine wars against the indigenous peoples, the Indian wars which involved the all-black buffalo soldier corps in the United States, etc.). If Nelson Díaz, the only survivor among his friends Antonio and Ascensión, is a symbol of egalitarianism and a nation’s potential²⁴, Lastre becomes a Pan-African icon for an entire diaspora; his death highlights a significant polemic for blacks that transcends national, continental and cultural differences. Equally important, he establishes solidarity with a second population (the indigenous people) that, in this case, is majorly responsible for his human development.

Nelson Díaz and Antonio Angulo: Activist-Intellectualism, Racial/Social Ambiguity and Imbalance

In Spanish America, caste laws were introduced to stratify three principal ethnic groups (Indigenous, African, and European) by the amount of European blood each individual carries. This legal system profoundly disenfranchised so-called “pure” blacks

²⁴ Fernando Balseca analyzes the question of nation in the Ecuadorian narrative, specifically mentioning Díaz as a quintessential character representing this issue, among several critics.

and indigenous people. These laws grouped mixed populations, ranging from “*zambos*” of black and indigenous descent to mulattoes and *mestizos*²⁵, into unique racial and socioeconomic classes. Lighter-skinned racial hybrids of European lineage had (nominally) slightly higher odds of gaining access to political clout and financial power than the pure castes as time progressed. However, representations of the mulatto or mixed-race Afro-descendent in the Spanish American literary tradition, particularly in the Caribbean, have been for the most part ambivalent. Claudette Williams²⁶ cites the example of *Sab*, a novel by the nineteenth-century Cuban writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, in which the mulatto “protagonist” who shares the name of the title is raised by his father/slave master’s brother and his family. Although he receives an education, demonstrates a desire to assimilate into white bourgeoisie society, and many whites consider him a superior being to “pure” black slaves, his tragic flaw is that he still does not have complete access to white privilege. Specifically, Sab is denied the hand of Carlota, the white woman whom he so desperately desires since, although he is a noble spirit, he is of “impure” (not entirely European) lineage. Mary Grace Miller highlights the changing nature of the literary portrayal of the mulatto (more often the mulatta) in *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race* as an individual who “occupied an ambiguous, overwhelmingly negative, position in the narrative on the colony or the emerging nation”

²⁵ *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean* (1998) provides a strong source of anthropological and sociological studies of “blackness” in the Americas outside of the United States and Canada. Norman E. Whitten and Diego Quiorga detail the specific racial hierarchies in Ecuador in the section “‘To Rescue National Dignity’: Blackness as a Quality of Nationalist Creativity in Ecuador”.

²⁶ “Cuban Anti-Slavery Narrative through Postcolonial Eyes: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda’s *Sab*” (2008)

(Miller 45) and later as the “incarnation of advantageous admixture” that is symbolic of national unity (Miller 46).

Juyungo localizes the aforementioned questions of social and racial ambiguity in the Pacific coastline of the Ecuadorian province Esmeraldas. Three specific characters embody those conflicts: the black protagonist Ascensión Lastre and his compatriots Nelson Díaz and Antonio Angulo. The last two are well educated mixed-race men who demonstrate vast amounts of social consciousness throughout the novel and yet struggle to negotiate their ideas as a result of their inherent contradictions. Díaz’s vision of raceless egalitarianism and his desire to be physically “blacker” seem to be conflicting ideas. Angulo is knowledgeable of Pan-African history and social relations yet sees little hope for black, mulatto, and *zambo* populations as a result of his own inferiority complex. As many intellectuals of African descent in the Americas, these characters are charged with the task of establishing equilibrium between their racial and social conditions in a place where color and class are sometimes interchangeable concepts.

Nelson, a young mulatto activist described by the narrator as “casi blanco”, first meets Lastre at a strike for worker’s rights at an encampment run by a local white landowner. Ascensión is somewhat reluctant to interact with him until Díaz praises the exploits of the Lastre lineage, specifically Ascensión’s uncle, a legendary commander who fought during the Conchista uprising. This is significant since Lastre identifies for the first time a “white” man as an ally who convinces him to reevaluate his worldview on race, class and society. Six years after their initial contact, the two reunite at the work

camp Kilómetro 18, where Nelson suggests to Ascensión that the rampant economic exploitation in Ecuador is due to “más que raza, la clase” (*Juyungo* 164). These words, however, engender a dilemma not only for Ascensión but Nelson himself. Díaz’s social project clashes with his racial memory. He is seemingly aware that his advantage over Lastre, and Angulo in terms of being a public voice for the exploited is his physical “whiteness”. “Nelson Díaz hubiera querido ser más negro. Era muy blanco por fuera, a pesar de que su abuela era una mulata oscura. Sólo él, frente a un espejo, se encontró rasgos negroides.” (*Juyungo* 160). This excerpt reflects the psychological challenge that Díaz must confront: he appears to desire darker skin so that a physically black man can finally be taken seriously as a political representative yet his light skin seems to provide him a more viable space of discourse. This scene puts into question his actual perspectives on race and class since, although he is a proponent of universal social justice, he seems somewhat troubled being considered a white man by Lastre and other characters in the novel. His most explicit questioning of race and class relations occurs during a protest against señor Valdez, a white lawmaker seeking to “modernize” Esmeraldas, and during his time in the Ecuador-Peru border war.

As in the case with many other Latin American countries in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, Ecuador dabbled with a project that emerged in discourses such as civilization and barbarism. Issues of race, class, and social relevance factored into these projects of “modernity”, a term often synonymous with the emulation of European or North American architectural, infrastructural, and cultural models. This frequently meant the “deculturation”, or erasure of a cultural aspect, of a marginal group,

normally of African or indigenous heritage. Specifically, in this novel, señor Valdez attempts to carry out such ambitions:

Es una verdadera salvajada la de estos negros. La civilización no puede entrar en nuestra provincia con semejantes cosas. Mi labor en el Congreso ha de tender al progreso de este pueblo, de cualquier manera. Necesitamos que venga gente de afuera, a mejorar la raza y las costumbres. (*Juyungo* 333)

In response to this statement, Max Ramírez, a mulatto who considers himself culturally and physically “white”, concurs that “el negro es un factor de atraso” and “solo sirve para cantar, bailar, dormir y revolcarse con sus sucias mujeres” (*Juyungo* 333). Nelson Díaz counters these arguments, citing that the gains of people such as Valdez are made from the economic exploitation of the same blacks that are accused of threatening modernity and civilization. This debate exposes several issues with Nelson’s earlier declaration of “más que raza, es la clase”. Clearly in Max and Valdez’s diatribes against blacks, a specific physical and cultural marker is utilized to target a group of people considered “barbaric” or “incapable of civilization”. In this case, blacks are as blatantly categorized in a lower caste in Esmeraldas as they are, as Antonio Angulo mentions, in Quito. Valdez’s reference to bringing in foreigners is a call to “better the race” through white European immigration and cultural “blanqueamiento”. In addition, Nelson does not use an egalitarian referent such as “workers”, “laborers”, or “the poor” but mentions specifically blacks as the exploited. Does he refer to the local conditions of a mostly black province? Is there an understanding of cultural or physical “blackness” as a marker of class? Would Nelson himself, as an “almost white” mulatto, be considered a viable intellectual and political threat if his skin were darker? This ambiguity becomes more

apparent in the scenes in which Lastre, Angulo, and Díaz are sent to fight against the Peruvians, a war in which the frontline is represented, in the novel's case, by almost exclusively blacks, mestizos and indigenous people.

The final chapters of *Juyungo* are considered by Richard L. Jackson as some of the most ambivalent in the novel. He cites the lack of white Ecuadorian participants presented on the frontlines of the war with Peru as a contradiction to Nelson's raceless egalitarian ideology. The stark contrasts between the racial composition of the frontline soldiers (mostly black, indigenous, and mestizo) and the individuals who embezzle and flee the country (mostly white elites) forces the reader to question even more Nelson Díaz's understanding of class and race. As Díaz, Angulo, and Lastre read newspaper headlines about the war against Peru, they also notice in the news an influx of institutional corruption within Ecuador, such as the headline "Oficial Pagador de El Oro desaparece con varios miles de sueres" (*Juyungo* 347). An indigenous man then remarks that the scantily armed black and Indian soldiers can persevere with a strong sense of patriotism. Díaz replies that "el patriotismo, lo único que nos podía quedar, está más relajado que nunca. No es que sea pesimista; pero es tan real como esta estúpida obligación que tenemos de combatir" (*Juyungo* 345) for "estos nobles y patriotas caballeros, nos acusan siempre de traidores y bandidos" (349). His anger stems from a continued disregard of the civil rights of Esmeraldan blacks. While politicians such as Valdez vilify blacks as a stain to be cleansed from Ecuador's public eye and "black" cultural elements such as Cangá's marimba music is criminalized, it is the Afro-Ecuadorian male population which is forced to fight in a border war on behalf of the

“nation”. The same individuals who doubt the contributions of Afro-Ecuadorians to national “culture” are the first to flee from their own sovereign state. Nelson considers these politicians, intellectuals, and landowners who want to create Ecuador in their own image as countrymen in name and birthplace only. Díaz again seems to be outraged that there are specific targets for social stratification and exploitation, with one’s race as a marker for class. I return to the protest against Valdez. In that scene, Valdez obviously marked people of color as the threat to civilization and Díaz refers clearly to blacks as an exploited *class*. To what “us” does Nelson refer? In this case, does his definition of an exploited class include exclusively blacks and Indians or poor whites as well? As possibly the only “white” representative of racial and social equality in the novel, this situation becomes more sordid as Ascensión, the black, proud protagonist, and Antonio Angulo, the mulatto of indigenous and black ancestry with an inferiority complex, both die. Nelson, the “white” mulatto, ends up the only survivor of the three men. Fernando Balesca, in his critical essay “En busca de nuevas regiones: la nación y la narrativa ecuatoriana”, cites Díaz’s doubts about Ecuador as a nation and refers to a specific quote: “Algún día haremos de él un verdadero país” (*Juyungo* 142). Nelson seems to be symbolic of Ecuador’s potential to become a true nation and the most capable person of the three main characters of carrying out such a project as a result of his supposedly stronger social consciousness. Angulo, the character on which I will elaborate later, demonstrates an academic savvy yet has doubts about Ecuador’s present. He does not share Nelson’s perspective on Ecuador’s future as far as race and class relations. However, Ascensión possesses a sense of social justice that rivals Nelson’s. Given his

lived experiences and consciousness of discrimination and exploitation, would Lastre have been just as viable a champion of social justice as Nelson? I suspect that this question remains debatable. Angulo presents a much clearer sense of ambiguity in relation to his physical and psychological state. Like his friends Ascensión and Nelson, he displays a strong self-consciousness. Unlike the other two, his most damning flaw is his pessimism for the prospects of black racial and social acceptance in Ecuador.

Antonio, a friend of Díaz who also attended a university in Quito and was present during the student strikes, is a mulatto who “se daba sus modos para disimilar su complejo de inferioridad” by performing whiteness through means of “speaking correctly” in front of his white cohorts (*Juyungo* 157). Angulo makes evident his discomforts with his “racial” condition, yet is well-versed in Pan-African history and sociology, something that even Lastre and Díaz, two characters who take enormous pride in being black, cannot claim. I return to the conversation that Angulo has with Lastre about the origins of African arrivals in Ecuador, specifically in Esmeraldas:

--Más quiero creé que se soliviantaron—interrumpió Lastre, que no imaginaba cómo se podría soportar esa vida.

--A esto se agrega que hay y ha habido siempre una afluencia de gente de color desde Colombia. (*Juyungo* 268-9)

He offers Lastre a historical background to his African past and also marks Colombia as a steady source of black Ecuadorian origin. His mention of the possible slave revolt also carries a subtly subversive tone. Yet, his commentary provides little in the way of benefit for either character. For Lastre, he seems more interested in the black condition in the

context of his time, as an Afro-Ecuadorian; he was already comfortable with being black before Angulo's didactic narration. This conversation, coupled with Antonio's contempt for his own African ancestry, makes him seem more of a touristic scholar than a revolutionary. Angulo's form of intellectualism is manufactured by a university that discourages the social action that Díaz's brand of activism and intellectual activity demands. Nevertheless, there is another scene in which Antonio appears to be genuinely concerned about his unique status as a mulatto in a region where the myth of racial democracy is endemic. In order to measure his misfortune as a "tantenelaire", he uses an African reference point:

Una vez leí en algún periódico que en cierta región de Sudáfrica vive un grupo miserable de mulatos hijos de ingleses y de negras. Los ingleses los deprecian y marginan, como es natural, pero lo extraño es que los negros también los repudian. Y nadie se quiere reunir con ellos, de tal modo que tiene que refugiarse en las montañas. (*Juyungo* 198)

Here, Antonio uses a foreign example of a stringent brand of racial stratification in order to put his misfortune into a global context. It is intriguing that he singles out the notion that the black South Africans defame the mixed-race children as a point of astonishment. Is he surprised by the blacks' attitudes towards mulattos simply because of a lack of solidarity that is somewhat present among blacks and mulattos of Esmeraldas? Is he shocked by the idea that the "pure" blacks in this case somehow have a superiority complex over the mixed-race people? I return to the idea that Antonio appears to have an internal conflict in the way of choosing which race he would prefer in terms of culture and access to material goods. His concern with racial belonging becomes personal in a

scene in which he reflects on, for once, his own situation as a dark mulatto during his time in Quito and in Esmeraldas, the former in which “es más acentuado el prejuicio racial y yo lo he sentido sangrientemente” (*Juyungo* 199). He also interprets racial discrimination in relation to death, a realm of (in)existence in which “no hay clases, ni razas, ni preocupación alguna que amargue el espíritu humano, nada (271)”. On the other hand, he adds that “Y la nada es el vacío absoluto. La negación más desconcertante (271)”. Even as he pictures a social utopia in the afterlife, he juxtaposes this perspective with the idea that only absolute oblivion can eradicate the ills he and other blacks, mulattos, indigenous, and poor suffer at the hands of local institutions. He determines that the inexistence of his color is paradoxically the means of ending discrimination. Later, it would appear that a woman of mixed race who will at least force him to reconsider his pessimism on matters of race.

During his travel to the island Pepepán, Antonio meets Eva, a mulatto woman who also is well aware of her condition, yet experiences little trauma as a result:

Casi nunca Eva se sintió incómoda con su pardo color y su mestizaje, porque rara vez le habían hecho, en el pueblo, alusiones deprimentes a ellos, o desaire alguno. Sería porque era bastante agraciada. Antes por el contrario, los hombres la perseguían en forma que le chocaba. No se había envanecido por ello. (*Juyungo* 251)

Eva is the example that Antonio needs in order to ease the tensions of his hybridity. In a scene in which Antonio fall almost mortally ill, she is the person who not only heals him physically, but treats him with the humanity he feels has been robbed from him. Yet he compares his male “mulatez” with her status as a mixed race female, whom he observes

in terms of her ability to attract white men. He then analyzes Eva's lightness, lamenting that "no sea más blanca (*Juyungo* 251)". Angulo constructs a race/sex matrix to measure social stratification; he still fails at avoiding his superficial scholarship despite the fact that he finally has a chance at an intimate relationship. With that said, his phobias about race seem to be much more contained than before he met Eva; he allows himself to feel noticeably more comfortable during his stay in Peperán. Unfortunately, his phobias resurface after Eva reveals that she is pregnant with his child. Combined with the fact that Ascensión's son, a product of an interracial marriage, dies in a fire caused by Lastré's enemies, Antonio's horror towards black lineage reemerges upon reacting to Eva's news:

--Tienes que abortarlo. Como alelada, Eva repuso:

--¿Qué? ¿No te alegras? ¿Acaso es pecado tener hijos?

--Tener hijos negros o mulatos, sí. No quiero que mi hijo sufra lo que yo he sufrido. Si fuéramos ricos podría dispensarse y solucionarse, pero en nosotros, no. Mi generación empieza conmigo y termina conmigo. (*Juyungo* 341)

It seems more apparent that his constant scholarship of blackness and hybridism in the Americas and Africa was indeed a more personal questioning of his role in Ecuadorian society, where he has been victimized by racism that he perceives as an unchangeable social phenomenon. Angulo's reaction to possibly being a father to a *moreno* is one of pure despair. Again, Antonio cannot avoid projecting his life experiences onto others, including his unborn child. He is especially incapable of coming to terms with his brown-skinned mulatto wife giving birth to his child since, for him, he has no chance of

producing a lighter-skinned son or daughter. For Angulo, being white would be the only deterrent that his child would have against racial discrimination and disenfranchisement. He will abandon his family to fight in the war and in the process commence the cycle of his child's suffering by committing such an act. Later, he will be the first of amongst the three main characters to die, just as punitively as he is introduced in the novel. If one assumes that Díaz's survival represents the potential of building a true nation, Angulo seems to be symbolic of the attitudes that must be erased in order to proceed with such an ambitious project.

Cultural Performance, Oral Chronicle, and *Marimba* as Non-Secondary Elements in *Juyungo*

As I have attempted to demonstrate, constant cultural exchange that is represented in *Juyungo* has a profound impact on the social, political, psychological and intellectual development (in the case of some characters, the detriment) of the protagonists Lastre, Angulo, and Díaz. Some of the more under-investigated subject matter in *Juyungo* is the presence of cultural exchange, oral storytelling, and popular oral tradition by the part of several minor characters in the novel and their collective significance in the overall esthetic and subject matter. This cultural production is sometimes musical (in the case of Crispulo Cangá's *décimas*), others pseudo-ritual (Tripa Dulce's guise as a shaman), and yet others demonstrate the power of oral storytelling (Cástulo and, later, Don Clemente Ayoví) in black and indigenous popular tradition. The aforementioned representations of these cultural traditions are the focal point of this section.

Cástulo Chancingre, a black bootlegger, takes in Ascensión upon asking him if he has a family, which the latter responds that he does not. This man will have a profound impact on Lastre for several reasons: he teaches Lastre how to read, write, and count, builds his consciousness of the shared cultural traits of the Colombian Pacific lowlands and northwestern Ecuador, and above all initiates his appreciation for oral narration, which later becomes apparent upon acquainting himself with Don Clemente, another man known for his anecdotes. One element in particular that holds a place in the memory of Ascensión is the frequent changing and morphing of the individuals and places involved in his stories. Specifically, he “recalls” one scene in which he encounters what appears to him to be an anthropomorphic lizard:

Al punto, como cosa de hadas, suás, surge de sopetón, al piecito mío, un enorme lagarto de cuatro brazas, y abriendo las tapas adornas con tres carreras de dientes, me habla: “Aquí no hay más canoa que ésta.” Yo me tiré para atrás por siaca—dijo la iguana--, pero el maldito se me vino encima y ordenó tronando...²⁷ Pero allá otra vez, suás, el caimán torna a su figura de gente, que había sido un indiecito viejo y mal encardo. (*Juyungo* 95)

This constant storytelling leaves a strong impression on Lastre that endures well into his adulthood. As I will also discuss in Don Clemente’s storytelling, Chancingre’s narrative serves a practical purpose that is not readily apparent: Lastre develops a savvy for exposing deceit and the motives of the individuals who attempt to carry it out. This is especially the case when he and Cástulo encounter the Colombian border pirates who murder the latter. One of the men, whom the narrator describes as wearing “un pañuelo floreado”, is later identified by Ascensión as the black witch doctor Tripa Dulce, who

²⁷ I abbreviated the content of the Cástulo’s story.

exploits the fear that Cayapas have of his supposed magical powers. Later, Ascensión just as easily exposes “el Hermanito”, the clergy member in the chapter that introduces Afrodita, as a fraud and, after that, the government officials from Quito who promise the black workers electricity and paved roads to quiet their protests. For me, it seems clear that Lastre learns to distinguish fiction and facts from Cástulo’s constant storytelling. Though his stories have the purpose of being less directly didactic, the lessons that Lastre extracts from these stories evoke images of the Anansi²⁸ tales of African tradition and the Br’er Rabbit/Tío Conejo stories of Afro-American and Native American traditions in which said anthropomorphic animals use superior cunning to overcome a challenge from a much larger opponent (sometimes, in ways that are shunned by the storyteller). As I mentioned, Lastre never loses his appreciation for oral narrative. Don Clemente will be a welcome presence for the protagonist.

Upon arriving on the island of Pepepán, Lastre and Angulo befriend Don Clemente Ayoví, an older man who is known for his storytelling (whether the listeners take his accounts seriously is a different matter). As Cástulo did before him, “Don Cleme” provokes the curiosity of Ascensión with his narrative, continuing to evoke the greatest memories of the young black man’s childhood and also his appreciation for oral literature. By inserting Ayoví into the novel during Lastre’s adulthood, Ortiz reinforces the importance of oral transmission of black traditions for the coastal Ecuadorian cultural continuum. For this particular work, I have a particular interest in one of Don Clemente’s stories. Ayoví tells this story in response to Crispulo “Azulejo” Cangá’s

²⁸ In the Ashanti language, Anansi is a word for “spider”

question about the ominous behavior of an old horse, due to the animal's ability to sense the soul of his dead owner:

La tunda es jodida, palabra—siguió don Clemente--; yo he topado su rastro cuando he andado monteando. La una pata es como de cristiano, pero la otra es de molinillo. Siempre cufiando las casas donde hay criaturas. Si la muy astuta ve a un chico, se transforma enseguida, por malas artes, en persona conocida del muchacho o en animalito de la casa. (*Juyungo* 237)

This creature, Don Cleme claims, lives in the forest that is located uphill from his residence. He also recalls “la tunda” attacking a boy who tried to return his chickens home. He later proclaims that the mysterious being is a fallen angel that landed in the jungle, waiting for new souls to devour. This narrative, while entertaining, is only taken seriously by Don Cleme's grandson Emérito. I mention this specific story since Lastre and Cangá will later venture into those same woods in order to harvest a certain plant that has been in local demand, despite whatever dangers may be present. Ayoví even goes so far as to explicitly warn the two men about the guards who occupy that general area, who are employed by a white landowner. Upon entering the forest, Ascensión uses the skills that he acquired from the Cayapas in order to navigate the area. He notices evidence of a large predator that has recently been in that zone of the jungle. He also recalls that “un gringo me decía que aquí en estas selvas no había tigres grandes ni bravos” (*Juyungo* 261). He begins to suspect otherwise, and what he sees next will affirm his prognostication:

Un puma color de perro lobo, enjuto y musculoso, mostró sus poderosos caninos, fruciendo la región de sus bigotes, mientras rugía roncamente. El herido volvió a caer exánime. El carnívoro le dio una ojeada y dispuso a atacar, moviendo su

cola gatuna y recogién dose sobre sí mismo, al igual que los mimís caseros. (*Juyungo* 261)

In this case, Don Cleme's story seems to have not the purpose of entertainment, but obvious informative value. The creature in his account, although somewhat fictionalized, seems to bear a striking resemblance to the puma that attacks Lastre in terms of its behavior: highly aggressive and violent. It should also be mentioned that Ayoví's narrative seems to discredit a so-called European expert who claims to have surveyed the land. Don Clemente's description of the mythical creature, coupled with the appearance of the puma, also seemingly evokes the images of Spanish-American chronicle and testimony, which has a tradition of projecting a western imagining of New World flora and fauna in order to describe things that previously had not existed in the chronicler's sense of reality²⁹.

Tripa Dulce, the same black man who kills Cástulo Canchingre, seems to have had contact with the Cayapa Indians for a significant amount of time despite the fact that his town is already aware of his racial background. Apparently, a combination of fear and reverence of his "magic" abilities as a witchdoctor somehow marks a space of power and a loose acceptance of the same. The following describes Tripa Dulce's social niche in the village:

Y el Gran Brujo Tripa Dulce derrochaba su sabiduría. Con grave y profunda voz entonaba un canturreo jeringonza, invocando a los buenos espíritus, y con pasmosa habilidad extraía de los cuerpos enfermos: culebritas sin colmillos, cascarnes de

²⁹ For example, what is today known as a Jaguar was sometimes called a "tigre" in early Spanish America and even in some parts of coastal Ecuador. For a North American example, a puma (derives from the Quechua word "poma" for the same animal) is called a mountain lion.

huevos rellenos con ojos de pescado y pelos de cristiano, alacranes sin ponzoña, pájaros de mal agujero, lagartijas de gran tamaño, murciélagos muertos y cucarachas blancas. (*Juyungo* 104)

Nevertheless, the reception of Lastre is something quite different: they treat him with a substantially stronger sense of distance than Tripa Dulce. This exchange provokes some questioning. Does the relationship between Tripa Dulce and the Cayapas suggest common religious philosophies between Africans and Indians? Does Tripa Dulce establish a uniquely American or Afro-American folk practice that is consistent with Cayapa beliefs? Judging by the fact that Ascensión exposes “El Gran Brujo” as a fraud, the possibility of the “witchdoctor” sharing common beliefs with the Cayapas definitely does not seem to be the case. However, Tripa Dulce’s ability to establish a place among the Cayapas is nonetheless incredible, as it seems that he has not only taken advantage of the stereotype of the “mystical negro” and the concept of being a “juyungo”, he also devises an elaborate and uniquely American religious practice in the process. I propose that, given the circumstances and motivation behind gaining the trust (or reverence) of this indigenous tribe, he has mimicked a cultural form that resembles just enough a pseudo-mystical practice carried out by an “Afro-Ecuadorian” or “Indigenous” shaman. Ortiz, through the insertion of Tripa Dulce, seems to have also made a cross-cultural indictment against religious institutions at large: he implicates the Church as an exploiter earlier when Ascensión avoids a conversion and later when el Hermanito abuses his clerical position in a small town by syphoning money from the locals and doing little to help them. A prime example of this religious exploitation occurs in the scene which a family offers their daughter to Tripa Dulce for marriage and, it appears, not to anger him

as well. Obviously, the village believes that he possesses supernatural powers. However, is this fear provoked because Tripa Dulce practices a religion that is recognized as characteristically indigenous or something that is believed to be an exotic, unknown form of sorcery? With all that said, Tripa Dulce certainly establishes a solid cultural exchange that appears to involve hybrid elements (indigenous and African), whether he intends to or not. The tribe identifies Tripa Dulce with the same derogatory term that they use to describe Lastre but never attempts to expel the former from their immediate area since it is clear that he is in a position of power.

As secondary characters go in Juyungo, Crispulo Cangá is perhaps the most important male character outside of Lastre, Díaz, and Angulo. Cangá, also known as “Azulejo”, seems to accompany Lastre in the absence of Nelson or Angulo, and is one of his first friends. His most important contribution is that he is a master of *marimba*, an Afro-Ecuadorian popular art form that fuses the traditional *décima* and does what the narrator describes as “dándole un inconfundible acento negroide” (*Juyungo* 137). As the case with Cástulo and Don Clemente, he is a representative of a major cultural element in Adalberto Otriz’s representation of Esmeraldas province. In fact, not only does Cangá have an entire chapter dedicated to his musical production, his expertise of marimba will eventually be perceived as a threat to local white society.

De la fecha en adelante, queda enteramente prohibido el efectuar bailes de marimba en las zonas centrales de la ciudad por cuanto constituyen un atentado contra el orden, la moralidad y las buenas costumbres de los pueblos civilizados. Solamente se permitirán dichos bailes en las dos últimas calles interiores, o en el baneario de Las Palmas. (334)

The letter ends with the words “Honor y Patria.” Such a notice reflects a long list of Afro-American cultural traditions that have either seen an attempted removal of such from the public or have been shunned by powerbrokers as “backward”, “uncivilized”, immoral, or plainly dangerous (Capoeria, American blues, salsa, marimba, Yoruba religious practices, etc.). In the case of many Latin American countries (Brazil included), projects to achieve “modernity” or “progress” have often come at the price of rural, popular, black, or indigenous cultural production, often resulting in laws that prohibit such in the public and sometimes private spaces. The irony behind the phrase “Honor y Patria” appears apparent in this letter considering that the civil rights of the black population are under fire and that they seem to have little in the way of full citizenship in this supposed nation. In addition, considering that government officials feel that Cangá’s marimba is so much of a threat to their national ambitions and ideals says volumes about the importance of the African element coastal Ecuador’s culture. In order to “control” this threat to the national image, Valdez and other public officials attempt to “acculturate” the black population, “whitening” (more specifically, Europeanizing) them in order to make Ecuador a more “presentable” country internationally. While Cangá recognizes his marimba music as a hybrid cultural element, blending African, Amerindian, and European instruments and rhythms (a result of transculturation), individuals such as Valdez perceive the “black” component of this musical genre as a “contamination” of a once “purely” European form (Valdez opines that the African element is a deculturation of Ecuadorian music tradition). Valdez’s call for European immigration seems to be also a method of “curing” the local white populations who

might potentially dance to marimba; thus, he seeks to bring those white Ecuadorians back to their more “European” roots (retro-transculturation).

Conclusion

Juyungo leans heavily on the development of the social and economic background of the major and minor characters, as well as their problematic interactions, in order to represent the diverse, intimately connected, and equally fragmented ideologies and intercultural relationships of Esmeraldas province. Through his encounters with new politics, new relationships, war, and even death, Ascensión goes through an evolutionary process not only as a black in Ecuador but as an indigenous man and national citizen. Despite the mixed feelings his presence provokes in the Cayapa Indians, Lastre learns skills that will serve him well later in his life (his animal tracking skills during his tagua harvesting trip literally saves his life!) and meets his first love. Pancha provides him with that first authentic experience of Afro-Indigenous solidarity and love, something that was difficult to come by during his stay with the Cayapa indigenous tribe. Lastre also confronts a distant and unknown culture of which he is a direct descendant. While Antonio Angulo may suffer an inferiority complex as a result of his dark skin, he is the principal reason why Ascensión understands the existence of the black Ecuadorian. I call this process retro-transcultural since Ascensión experiences a symbolic return to his ancestral origins as a result of Antonio’s knowledge of Pan-Africana, making Lastre fully conscious of his status as an Afro-American. Nelson Díaz is the person who will convince Ascensión to become not only aware of racial discrimination but wholesale

economic exploitation by powerbrokers who at once claim to be representatives of culture and the nation but also vilify the people responsible for that wealth (blacks, Amerindians, and poor white Hispanics). Although Nelson heightens his social consciousness, it is Afrodita who is responsible for his enhanced pride in being black and initiates his questioning of social hierarchies in Ecuador. He later confronts his worldview on race when his sexual relationship-intended-to-be-racial-conquest of María results in their marriage, leaving him to reevaluate what and whom he actually detests in Ecuador. Although Lastre never cedes to the idea of racial democracy or social utopia, he learns to further strengthen his tri-ethnic and national consciousness as a result of such a diverse lived experience. His adventures and death evoke questions not only about the role of the black Ecuadorian but blacks in the Americas in general.

Nelson Díaz and Antonio Angulo, as mulatto intellectuals in *Juyungo*, face the challenge of establishing racial and social equilibrium while at the same time coming to terms with their individual ideological conflicts concerning the state of Ecuador as a country. Neither denies that class and race are often ambiguous factors that affect their ambitions as individuals and as vectors of group sentiment. Nevertheless, they, as their more action-oriented cohort Ascensión, approach these problems from unique perspectives, with varying results. For Díaz, the question is negotiating his populist worldview with the evaluation of his racial identity. While he favors an egalitarian project in which the black, indigenous, white, and mixed-race working classes are allies against a common exploiter, he seemingly second-guesses why he is taken as a serious threat to the political opposition. He openly desires to be darker skinned despite the fact

that he tells Ascensión that class is more of a factor than race in the social underdog's struggle to earn full recognition of national citizenship. In the case of Antonio, he frequently utilizes Pan-African comparisons of discrimination to reinforce the idea that racial discrimination is a nearly insurmountable challenge to overcome. Both characters engender challenging questions of nation building and perseverance for blacks throughout the Americas.

Though the aforementioned characters are mostly secondary in the overall story of *Juyungo*, it seems appropriate to at least consider their roles as not only apparent but very relevant representatives of literary transculturation in this novel. From folk religions, to oral storytelling, to popular musical traditions, characters such as Tripa Dulce, Chancingre, Don Clemente, and Crispulo Cangá demonstrate cultural elements either congeal or clash with other cultural forces (Cangá's marimba does this simultaneously) and yet have come to fruition in a particular geographic locale. All of these cultural productions have a transcultural element (African-indigenous, Spanish-African, tri-ethnic, etc.) as a result such a contact, whether it is innovative (marimba's Spanish musical structure and "Afro-Ecuadorian" content) or conflictive (legislation by a white elite to eliminate a cultural element marked as "barbaric"). These are elements, at least in the context of this text, that consider attention as does Lastre's human development, Díaz's motives to make a "true" nation of Ecuador, or Angulo's ambivalence towards being mixed-race.

CHAPTER III

*EL CHANGADO*³⁰: PAN-AMERICAN COSMOVISION AND STRUGGLE FOR CITIZENSHIP IN *CHANGÓ, EL GRAN PUTAS*

This chapter explores the representations of Pan-American transculturation, nation-building, the construction (and deconstruction) of national myth, and questions of citizenship in Manuel Zapata Olivella's 1983 novel *Changó, el gran putas*. This literary text, through multiple narrative voices (written, oral, first, second, and third person), literary genres (oral poetry, prose) and fields of study (theology, anthropology, sociology, history, literature, etc.), chronicles the "personal" stories of characters from multiple geographic, cultural, and linguistic spaces in the New World and their varied experiences with slavery, bids for national independence, racial discrimination, and struggles for full recognition of citizenship. The method of presenting these Diaspora-wide commonalities is the presence of the *orisha* (it becomes apparent that these "West African" gods are African and American), the "dead" ancestors, and their constant involvement in the living combatants' bids for liberation and self-determination. The ancestors remind the individual combatants of past events and incidences that are analogous to a specific

³⁰ This is a play on both Zapata's rendering of Changó, who curses his people to struggle for their liberation in the Americas and is at the same time cursed for waging war on the rest of the *orisha*, and the Mexican term La Chingada, which Octavio Paz analyzes in his essay *El laberinto de la soledad*. In that analysis, he discusses the myth of "la Malinche's" betrayal of the Aztec empire, eventually leading to a conflicted mestizo identity (Spanish and indigenous).

present situation that the combatant confronts. Through this frequent interaction between orisha, ancestors, and combatants, there is an attempt to transcend national borders, cultural differences, and national myths such as the United States' "liberty", Brazilian "racial democracy", and *mestizaje*.

Since the publication of *Changó*, there have been several in-depth studies of that novel, along with several more Zapata prose works³¹. Yvonne Captain Hidalgo, in *The Culture of Fiction in the Works of Manuel Zapata Olivella*, describes *Changó* as a "plotless" novel because of the seemingly never-ending story of struggle for liberation by the Diaspora combatants and the (non)conclusion of the work, in which Elegba, the intermediary between the dead and the living, attempts to restrain *Changó*'s wrath for the failure of the marginalized to liberate themselves. She also analyzes the theological, historical, mythical, literary, and cross-cultural manifestations of Shango (the English spelling of the lightning *orisha*'s name) in Africa and the Americas and Zapata's constant preoccupation with belief in *Changó* and one of his earlier novels, *En Chimá, nace un santo* (1963). Antonio D. Tillis locates Zapata's concern with hemispheric race relations, one of the major subjects of *Changó*, after his travels through Central America and the United States and in his travelogue-based fictional works *Pasión vagabundo* and *He visto la noche*. He also discusses the presence of tri-ethnic intermingling in *Changó* in a chapter which he also considers this theme in two later Zapata works (*¡Levántate, mulato!* in 1989 and *La rebelión de los genes* in 1997). My primary concern in this

³¹ Richard L. Jackson, Raymond Williams, Yvonne Captain-Hidalgo, and Antonio D. Tillis have produced among some of the most well-known analysis of *Changó, el gran putas*.

chapter is how Zapata uses this Pan-American trajectory (in Changó's case, a cast of living and dead historical and fictional figures of distinct nationalities and ethnicities that are united under the pantheon of the *orisha*) to represent the widespread and varied cross-cultural contacts (collaborative, conflictive, or mutual) as common throughout the hemisphere, including North America. In the first section, I consider Zapata's Changó's cultural survival, his attempts to ally himself with any regime seeking liberation (from slavery, a sovereign nation, disenfranchisement, etc.) in an effort to free his *muntu* (his oppressed American progeny), regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race, or creed, and his own transformation from African to Afro-American. I discuss in the second session the involvement of the ancestors (Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois in this case) in the gradual recollection of the ancestral memory of Agne Brown, a North American "protagonist" in the novel. They will play a role in reminding Agne of significant Afro-American contribution to national cultures throughout the Americas, despite suggestions to the contrary from "official" historical and academic claims that seemingly frame blacks as "barbarous" and "backwards". This section also considers Manuel Zapata Olivella's idea of "*endoculturación*", cultural differences within the national border as a result of the development of specific regional cultures. This concept, I will argue, applies to differences within a specific ethnic group, as *Changó* also demonstrates. The third part discusses Zapata's portrayal of the vilification and non-recognition of black soldiers who have fought on behalf of a national myth or ideology ("freedom", for example) that is not practiced for all national citizens. These fighters, in an attempt to acculturate to national cultural values through war, are either vilified for questioning unfulfilled promises of

equal citizenship (Zapata's literary portrayal of José Prudencio Padilla) or disappear from existence as a result of second-class citizenship and representation by their sovereign states (the fictional Joseph Stephens). Zapata's representation of the often ambivalent relationships between New World blacks and Amerindians and his romanticized portrayals of their alliances are the points of departure in section 2.4. While there are thematic similarities in both *Juyungo* and *Changó*, the literary techniques utilized in the two novels differ substantially. This chapter is also an attempt at analyzing Zapata's literary innovations in *Changó*.

A Liberating Theology: Zapata's Changó as a Cultural Survivor

The orisha cults have managed to permeate the Americas and West Africa through oral and written theology, literature, and history, regardless of geography, race, ethnicity, or belief as evidenced by Manuel Zapata Olivella's rendering of the lightning *orisha* Changó in the novel *Changó, el gran putas*. I single out Changó specifically because he/she appears to be the embodiment of transculturation in the Pan-African world, both in religious tradition and literary representation. In both Africa and the Americas, Changó has taken on a myriad forms as a result of intensive cultural contact and the flexibility of Yoruba and Yoruba-based cults in said regions. In West Africa alone, he is reputed to have multiple origins. The historic Changó, according to Akítuúndé Akínyemí, is said to be the deified fourth king of the Oyo Empire. In addition to this, the story of this king's deification has its own variations. There is also the primordial variety, which is said to have been already an *orisha* before the king who

represented him was ever born (according to this account, the fourth king of Oyo happened to share a name with the deity to represent him on Earth). There is even a female version who is apparently the wife of the chief lightning god, Ará, in two western Yoruba kingdoms, Sabe and Ketu,³² as a compromise to maintain the latter deity as the primary keeper of thunder and lightning (*Sango* 88). European missionaries, in an effort to discredit the *orisha*, revised the story of the fourth Oyo king by propagating a version of his deification in which he hangs himself after seeing the destruction that he has caused in Yorubaland as a result of his warlike behavior. In the Americas, the syncretism of Changó and other *orisha* is well documented in Cuban Santería and Brazilian Candomblé, as well as the Haitian, Dominican, and Louisiana varieties of voodoo. Amazingly, as a response to this syncretism, a cult of Shangó was initiated in Beaufort, South Carolina in order to “Africanize” the divinity, thus creating a black US version and denying the flexibility demonstrated in West African and other American cults. As many other deities in polytheistic religious practices, Changó has taken on various powers and responsibilities (lightning, thunder, fire, justice, etc.), and consequently overlaps other *orishas*³³.

³² According to Mark Schiltz, this Changó is said to have come into existence as a result of a marriage of convenience with Ará in order to negotiate with the Oyo Empire, whose main cult of lightning is the former. Considering that the two rival areas are theocracies, this Changó myth seems to have been conceived from political implications (see *Sango* 88-9).

³³ Joel E. Tishken, Toyin Falola, and Akíntúndé Akínyemi, in the introduction of *Şàngó in Africa and the African Diaspora*, cite examples from Greco-Roman mythology in which the Olympic gods take on several different roles and, as a result, their “domain” overlaps. For example, they cite Zeus as not only the king of the Greek gods and the deity of lightning, but as the god of marriage, property, oaths, liberation, and of the city, to name a few (*Şàngó* 6). According to these scholars, such overlapping in divine responsibilities is characteristic of polytheistic religious tradition.

In terms of cultural flexibility and the forms in which this deity is represented (theology, sociology, written history, oral history, written/oral literature, etc.), Manuel Zapata Olivella's rendering of Changó is no different in this respect. In fact, his representation of the orisha is seemingly more capable of cultural survival and spiritual manifestation than the aforementioned versions. As in the other forms of Sango literature, Zapata Olivella's Changó is a warlike god who is responsible for lightning, thunder, fire, dance, fertility, and (to some extent) justice who easily solicits and makes space for his/her existence under a number of varying worldviews. This one, however, especially capable of influencing the thoughts and actions of individuals who do not openly worship or convoke him, if at all³⁴, "Shango's embodiment includes both the reluctant and even the previous nonbelievers" (Captain-Hidalgo 143). There are two explanations as to how this Changó influences both believers and non-believers. In this novel, he is not only a deity but an embodiment of the idea of resistance and liberation, concepts that have taken on drastically different meanings in relation to slavery and human rights issues in the Americas. He also shares very human qualities with his combatants; his plans to liberate his oppressed people (regardless of race) frequently fail. His combatants attest to this imperfection through their personal narrations. Although Zapata's Changó rarely speaks directly, he uses multiple first-person narrative voices of ancestral "protagonists" (both historical and fictional) to offer an account of their roles in

³⁴ Although orisha worship became a phenomenon amongst white Catholics in Cuba and Brazil in the 20th century (due to the similarities of local Catholic saints and the orishas), there was little to no space for such religious practices in North American Protestantism and Evangelism for blacks or whites in the United States, as I will discuss in a later section of the chapter. Nevertheless John Brown, a North American white Protestant abolitionist, makes an appearance as one of Changó's combatants because of his investment in the struggle against oppression.

liberation struggles or their betrayal of those projects. One particular demand from his *ekobios* (soul brothers and sisters, as Richard Jackson once translated the phrase) distinguishes him from the other versions is that his call for those people to battle for their liberation is American insofar as he calls for a war to free themselves from oppression in that region. His demand for all ethnic groups in the New World, whether they are black, mulatto, Amerindian, mestizo, or white (later on, he mentions Chicanos, Jews and Asian-Americans and, in the process, expands Changó's influence to the US Pacific) reinforces Changó's condition as American. As for his status as an African American, Zapata creates a new mythology for his Changó: the deity, along with his subjects, is condemned to exile in the Americas for starting a never-ending war against his *orisha* brethren. He, as his people, has to adjust to new social realities such as the presence of Western religious beliefs, slavery, discrimination, miscegenation, vilification, and destitution as well as endure a prolonged resistance and liberation effort that is not limited to participants of African descent. Yvonne Captain-Hidalgo warns the reader to consider that "once the deity transcends the ocean he is no longer, strictly speaking, African or even Yoruba"; he is Afro-American (Captain-Hidalgo 137). As the people that Zapata's version of Changó curses to slavery and challenges to regain their freedom, the deity himself must readjust to varying social and cultural conditions in a massive and diverse geographical space while at the same time he must maintain a presence in a land where there are constant attempts to silence and eventually obliterate him from public discourse. His ambiguous presence in the Americas in *Changó, el gran putas* becomes evident in his encounters with José María Morelos, Nat Turner, and Simón Bolívar.

The section of the novel entitled “José María Morelos: El llamado de los ancestros Olmecas”, as is common throughout *Changó*, uses multiple narrators to tell a revisionist story of the aforementioned Mexican historical figure’s uprising against the colonial government. The historic Morelos, a priest, was executed in 1815 for rebelling against the royal crown, continuing a revolt initiated earlier by another religious leader, Manuel Hidalgo (Fowler 18). Morelos’s troop consisted of indigenous, mestizo, and, according to George Reid Andrews, black slaves from the port city of Veracruz (Andrews 58). Zapata’s Morelos, however, is written in as one of Changó’s chosen combatants for the freedom of the Mexican *muntu*³⁵ (in this case, similar to the historical rebels in these early Mexican wars for independence, black slaves and indigenous peons). It becomes apparent that he identifies these African gods as those who existed in the Aztec religious pantheon upon encountering Changó’s messenger and convoker of ancestral memory, Ngafúa:

Sobre una montaña, lejana y presente, Tláloc me miraba con su enorme cara de jaguar, emplumado los hombros. Antes de que pudiera advertirlo, los campos se cubren de agua hasta sumergirse en una inmensa laguna. Ngafúa adivina mi asombro:

--El río de los partos de la madre abuela Sosa Illamba³⁶ que no cesa de correr. Necesitarás muchos soldados para tus guerras. (*Changó* 313)

Tláloc, in the Aztec religious tradition, is a god associated with water and fertility as well as thunder and lightning, elements that are components of Yemayá and Changó’s powers

³⁵ Muntu is a term used by Zapata Olivella in *Changó* to define living individuals who are fighting for freedom and against oppression, regardless of race. According to Captain-Hidalgo, the phrase is first coined by Janheinz Jahn, an imminent figure in African culture studies.

³⁶ Sosa Illamba, the mythical mother of the first Afro-American in *Changó*, is the ancestral representative of Yemayá, goddess of the oceans and rivers.

in Zapata Olivella's representation of the aforementioned deities. It seems that Zapata takes into account the ambiguity of the roles of polytheistic divinities not only in African but in Amerindian cosmovisions, establishing a link between the two religious traditions, as well as connecting the two with the war of independence/freedom that Ngafúa foresees. There is also something else of note: as with the African religious tradition in the Caribbean and Black Atlantic, the indigenous spiritual experience never falls from existence, despite early efforts by Catholic clergy to acculturate the Amerindians in Mexico.

Zapata, just as there are a great number of origin stories behind the diverse West African and Afro-American orisha cults, creates a new mythos in order to explain the mystery of the Olmec civilization, which has produced art forms which feature faces with African and Chinese features. Nagó³⁷, one of the Ancestors, leaves little doubt about this common mission between the two ethnic groups, one that was apparently destined to occur:

He redescubierto la tierra del Anáhuac
la tierra que parió Odumare
la olvidada tierra de olvidados Ancestros,
la tierra de los abuelos Olmecas ngangas poderosos de artes mágicas.
He visto sus ciudades abandonadas
cabezas de príncipes africanos talladas en piedra
celosamente guardadas por el jaguar
en la oscura y silenciosa selva. (*Changó* 312)

³⁷ Nagó, in the chapter entitled "El muntu americano", is one of the Africans who lead a rebellion against a group of slave traders, which results in a shipwreck on the Caribbean islands.

Here, Nagó reveals a direct African connection to the Americas. As a region to which blacks were predestined to arrive, Odumare had already created the Afro-American. This, of course, is a mythical revision of the possible ancestry of an indigenous people who have few historical records, save the giant statues with “negroid” features³⁸. In addition, the animal that protects this land is the subject of Amerindian mythology, the jaguar. This American cat, given this role as the spiritual protector of the land’s jungles, adds the warlike element that is characteristic of Changó. There is one question to consider in this scene: does Morelos actually see Tláloc or Changó as imagined in an indigenous cosmovision? This reflects the ambiguous history of the Changó which appears in Yoruba and Afro-American religious traditions, as well as other orisha. Consider Elegba (aka Echú, Exú, Legba, Elegúa, etc). The popular African and American rendering of this orisha charges him with opening the door between the dead and the living. In Brazilian Candomblé, Elegba has two primary associations: São Pedro in Porto Alegre and as the devil in Bahia. Also, the fact that an orisha or a Mayan/Aztec god, like the Greco-Roman deities, may carry so many names should be not be understated; the aforementioned deities, as I have mentioned, have managed to transcend geographic, political, social, ethnic, and linguistic differences with sometimes the smallest adjustment. I would argue that Tláloc, in this case, *is* Changó. Tláloc, as a consequence of Odumare’s mythical creation of the Americas is, like Zapata’s Changó, a hybrid divinity and is directly under the orisha pantheon. Like the Changó represented in

³⁸ I am well aware that the notion of the Olmec civilization having African ancestry was and still is highly controversial in the fields of history and archeology. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increase in scholarship about the origins of the Olmec people, of whom scholars still have little knowledge outside of their art forms and human remains. There was also increased scholarly activity among Pan-Africanists of the same civilization.

this novel, Zapata's Tláloc is African American. As the many versions of Changó, this Tláloc also finds himself taking on a role which he had never taken under any of the Aztec/Mayan mythology: a god of war and dissent. Such a new responsibility for Tláloc is not out of the realm of possibility, for the reasons that I have already cited. The major factor that attributes to the shared cosmovisions, however, is the fact that Changó, a supposedly "African" deity, calls on a man of Amerindian ancestry to lead a war in which not only black but indigenous independence and emancipation is at stake. Zapata's Changó also presents himself in places where his appearance is seemingly impossible to conceive: North American evangelical Christianity. Certainly, he finds a point of penetration, as the Nat Turner represented in this novel narrates.

One of the strategies of slaveholders and clergy members to enforce obedience among black and indigenous slaves was to justify the practice of slavery through Christian scripture. In the United States, one of the primary references in the Bible was the story of the curse of Ham, whose children saw him nude; they were allegedly darkened as a result. The descendants of Ham are forced into eternal servitude for the actions of his children. The aforementioned European-Americans proclaim that black slaves were the direct descendants of Ham in order to maintain racial and social hierarchies. In the case of late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Virginia, the Evangelical Church accepted slaves into fellowship, with most white followers believing that their brand of Christianity would effectively coerce obedient and docile behavior from them. Such notions were not exclusive to white evangelicals; some black Evangelical reverends stressed similar ideas. Another procedure in engendering this

obedience, throughout all of the Americas, was to criminalize African religious traditions and severely punish any continued practice of the same. Nevertheless, the introduction of the Bible to Afro-Americans produced unexpected results: from black struggles to regain their freedom, which varied from non-violent (abolitionist movements that used the bible to justify black liberation), to armed combat and resistance (the Southampton Insurrection, for example)³⁹. These ideas are consistent with the concept of Zapata's Changó, a god that has fallen out of grace for rebelling and in turn forces his children to fight for their own liberty. As I have mentioned earlier, Zapata's Changó is also a deity of dissent who calls for such action from his people in the Americas. In "Los ancestros combatantes", Nat Turner, a slave who was made famous for his long and bloody armed struggle against slaveholders in Virginia until his own brutal death, attests to this phenomenon in his narration:

En el culto de los domingos se predicaba que el Señor reclama de los esclavos
obediencia y fidelidad a sus dueños. Pero yo termino mis sermones con la vieja
profecía repetida desde hace siglos por nuestros ekobios:
Los primeros serán los últimos
Y los últimos serán los primeros. (*Changó* 394)

That is to say, the same spirit of rebellion and desire for freedom with which Changó charges the *muntu* is found, ironically, in the same book that slave masters and church leaders (both white and black) attempt to coerce the culture of obedience and resignation. He also seems to associate the American slaves with a particular ethnic group in the Old

³⁹ Charles F. Irons provides an historical analysis of such forms of anti-slavery activity, as well as the manifestations of Proslavery Christianity in the Mid-Atlantic (Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland) in *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity* (2008).

Testament of the Bible which goes through the same oppression in Egypt: the Hebrews. This Western religious book, then, is a transcultural tool for individuals of African descent used in order to liberate themselves and become citizens in a new land in which their demands (liberty, freedom, etc.) are national narrative. Similar to the historic Nat Turner, Zapata's character claims to be a warrior on Earth sent by God to rise against slavery in the United States; he never seeks a return to Africa, but desires human treatment in the land in which he is born. This manifestation of Changó is clearly American, considering that the Bible and Western religious narrative do not exist in the world of African Changó; as with many other blacks in the Americas, Nat's contact with Christianity does not result in acculturation (accommodation to the demands of the imposing culture) but neoculturation (in this case, a Western religious object is the catalyst for black resistance). This manifestation of Changó has to adapt to a population in the US Afro-Americans, who are least likely in the Diaspora to grant the *orishas* a space in their belief systems. However, Zapata's Nat Turner does not seem to deny the presence of Changó in his Christian teachings:

Asustado, alzo la vista al cielo en busca de una confirmación divina. Changó-Sol comienza a teñirse con una Cortina de humo verde azulado. Me tiré al suelo y aprieto la Biblia de mi padre contra el pecho. Te confieso, Agne Brown, sentí miedo. Había llegado la hora anunciada por la Sombra de Nagó. (*Changó* 394)

This scene is strikingly similar to Morelos's encounter of Tláloc/Changó. In this case, however, Zapata's Nat Turner looks for a divine signal from the Judeo-Christian Jehovah and, at that moment, he seemingly discovers that the sign is actually a force that his ancestors had abandoned for a new religion: Changó. At the same time, this scene

reminds the reader (if that reader is familiar with the Old Testament of the Bible) of the ubiquitous divine signs from Jehovah to initiate holy battles and bids for liberation/redemption. Just as Changó and the orishas share similar characteristics with the Aztec/Mayan gods (the ability to take on the responsibilities of another deity), they share a theology of liberation with the God of the Old Testament. Changó answers Turner's prayers to the Judeo-Christian God immediately as a result of his belief that liberation is an immediate demand. There is something to be said about Changó's response to this prayer. As a very human-like deity, he does not allow his ego to consume him so much that he ignores Turner's call because of his stronger belief in Christianity; as his encounter with Morelos suggests, it is certainly not the first time that he elects a previous non-believer. Although Nat proclaims Christianity as his preferred religion, he seems to establish Changó at the very least as an idea which transcends his religious and national borders: subversion and freedom. The historic Turner, in his confessions, declared that God had shown him a sign (he saw a solar eclipse) that it was his mission to bring freedom to black slaves in the United States. In the rewriting of his confessions, he sees the Changó which is associated with the sun, a signal for war or rebellion. In Fernando Ortiz's definition of acculturation, the process is a violent, one-sided phenomenon in which the imposing party manages to rid the targeted cultural group of an element that it finds detrimental to society. This also results in the assimilation of the targeted group. In this case, although this brand of Christianity supposedly leaves no room for the "African" spiritual worldview to prosper, the irony is that the characteristics of Zapata's Changó align very much with the Old Testament's content: liberation through

dire measures. This incarnation of Changó has managed to adapt to a situation in which even subtle worship of the African gods is nearly impossible as a result of the strictly monotheistic finalism that this sect of Christianity demands. However, as I mentioned earlier, Changó's presence does not always indicate a victory for his combatants. Because of his imperfections, he is bound to select potential liberators who define ideas such as "freedom" and "emancipation" in terms of particular candidates for the right to be free.

As I mentioned earlier, Zapata's Changó, just as the New World blacks, have to not only adjust to a Western political and social framework, he also realizes that his collaboration with other ethnic groups, in many cases, is also a requisite for a successful campaign for his people's liberation. Captain-Hidalgo also cites another challenge for this Afro-American deity: "taking into account the very imperfectability of Shango, at least one conclusion is undeniable: this god is of a very human nature" (Captain-Hidalgo 150). While Changó understands that he, and much of the African Diaspora, must have a productive cross-cultural dialogue due to a countless number of new and already-existing worldviews in the Americas, his attempts at such collaboration often fall short. In the section "Sangres reencontradas", Zapata considers the case of the Spanish-speaking colonies and, in one particular chapter, Simón Bolívar's reluctance to immediately abolish slavery in Gran Colombia. Colonial Spanish America found itself in a unique situation through the establishment of a racial and social caste system. This brand of stratification not only disenfranchised blacks, Amerindians, and mixed-race groups but also whites who were born in the colonies, although to a much lesser degree than the

other categories. Although American creoles were allowed access to financial power (there was a powerful creole elite developed through commerce and slavery), the same could not be said for their attempts at soliciting positions in the local viceroyalty since they were not born in the Iberian Peninsula. While all individuals living in Spanish America were considered vassals of the (Castilian) king⁴⁰, the issue of Spanishness was significantly less settled. Tamar Herzog cites tensions between *criollos* (American-born Spaniards) and *peninsulares* (Iberian-born Spaniards) on the issue of Spanish citizenship. European-born Spaniards argued that they were more deserving of political offices in Spanish America as a result of their Iberian birth and that creoles “were born into a different climate, which caused physical and moral degeneration, because many of them were mestizos or at least had some Indian influence, and because their loyalty to Spain was incomplete” (Herzog 146). While in the colonial United States there may have been a socioeconomic rift between rich and poor whites, there was no such caste legislation that divided British and colonial Euro-Americans⁴¹; poor Spanish American creoles, then, were doubly disenfranchised. The spectre of Spain’s ideology of *pureza de sangre* not only raised questions of the racial but also the national, therefore “oppressing” colonial whites of Spanish America. Such discrimination was a major factor in the wars of

⁴⁰ Tamar Herzog discusses the Spain’s documented complexity as a political entity as a factor in further confusion in the debates about the citizenship of Spanish American creoles. “In Spanish America, a Creole discourse gained importance in the late eighteenth century and during the years of imperial crisis. This discourse, however, was not ‘nationalist’. It strove to demonstrate that Spanish America was an independent kingdom within the structures of the Spanish monarchy; that is, it was an independent kingdom within the structures the kingdoms of Spain” (Herzog 144).

⁴¹ Indentured servitude was such an institution that disenfranchised impoverished British colonists and Anglo-Americans, forcing them to work to pay off the “debts” of their family members or, sometimes, imagined ones.

independence against the crown in the early 19th century⁴². Another occurrence would provoke overt dissent in the Americas: Haiti becomes the first Latin American country to gain its independence, and does this against Napoleon Bonaparte's France. The time could not be any more fitting for Zapata's Changó to call on combatants in Spanish America than after the achievement of a notable portion of the African Diaspora⁴³. However, the irony of the Haitian Revolution was that, because the combatants happened to be black slaves fighting against white (and mulatto) landowners, a transcultural⁴⁴ and transnational wave of negrophobia resulted. Simón Bolívar's regime was not spared. For this, Changó sends his messenger Ngafúa to remind Bolívar of his reluctance to abolish slavery in a conversation with his black *criada* Hipólita:

¡"Libertad"! Esa palabra la oigo repetir diariamente en la sangre de mis Ancestros y en las de mis futuros descendientes. Aún arden mis ilusiones y le pregunto: --¿Seremos libres algún día?

...--Son las Sombras de tu amo Simón y del Almirante José Prudencio. Combatirán juntos por la Independencia de sus países pero no se ponen de acuerdo para darnos la libertad. (*Changó* 236)

⁴² Will Fowler cites multiple factors for the beginnings of revolution in Spanish America (The American, French, and Haitian revolutions, the dissent of displaced Jesuits, etc.), including "the power struggle between creoles and peninsulares" over local authority (Fowler 16).

⁴³ From a literary standpoint, Captain-Hidalgo states that there is much to be said about the universality of Zapata's Changó since he often has to "step outside his apparent blackness" and choose combatants who are a.) of another ethnicity or b.) nonbelievers of his existence. I would argue that the chapter "Simón Bolívar: memoria del olvido" is a direct challenge to the Western literary, political, and social notion of universality since, ironically, Spanish American creole elites could not step outside of the Haitian's blackness sufficiently in order to fully consider their fight for independence just that and not a "race war".

⁴⁴ I use "transcultural" here since, obviously, there were varying countermeasures issued in the Americas to handle the perceived threat of slave rebellion. Many American countries decided to discontinue the shipment of Africans as a result. In the United States and Canada, blacks who were considered "civilized" were sent to Liberia and Sierra Leone to colonize Africa and possibly "civilize" the locals. In most Hispanophone countries, slavery was abolished in the 1820s, with the exception of most of the nations derived from Gran Colombia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

Although Changó chooses Simón, a white creole whom, as a number of other whites in Gran Colombia (Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador), a black woman helps raise, Ngafúa reminds Hipólita that he betrays his Afro-American brethren by postponing the abolition of black soldiers who contributed their lives to gain citizenship in the new Spanish American nation. Through the Shadow Dog, a supernatural force that reveals ethnic bloodlines, it is revealed that Bolívar is a mestizo. Similar to the New World *muntu* newborn who becomes American through his nurturing by indigenous women⁴⁵, Bolívar finds his African bloodlines and Changó through Hipólita's nurturing. Tillis indicates that Hipólita's role as Bolívar's surrogate mother makes him, at the very least, culturally mulatto:

It is through these constant reminders that the spirit of Changó and his messengers communicate the need for racial identification and acceptance. The fictionalized character of Simón Bolívar is forced to acknowledge the truth of his mixed identity. (Tillis 91)

While I agree that Zapata's Bolívar is confronted with his (symbolic) mixed heritage, I propose that he is not the only character in this case who experiences *mestizaje*. It is my opinion that, as a result, both Changó and Simón become mulattos. While Zapata's Simón Bolívar may be of creole parents, he directly nurtures from a woman of Changó's bloodlines, infusing the deity's rebellious and revolutionary characteristics directly into his body. Much like the mythical first Afro-American child who is nourished by the Arawak women in the Caribbean earlier in the novel, his inception into Changó's pantheon of combatants begins with his black surrogate mother. As for Changó's

⁴⁵ I discuss this scene later on in section 3.3.

mulatez, this occurs once he elects this Euro-American to join his combatants by injecting his essence into Bolívar through Hipólita, making his creole body a vessel for a future liberation of all inhabitants of Gran Colombia. Zapata's Bolívar, as the mulatto Petición of Haiti, has doubts about abolishing black slavery although both were either participants or were inspired by the independence gained by Haitian blacks. There is also another important figure cited in this chapter of *Changó*: José Prudencio Padilla, a tri-ethnic admiral who was a key player in Gran Colombia's eventual independence, was sentenced to death for accusations of provoking slave rebellion by questioning the lack of action to liberate black slaves, also combatants of *Changó*, for their contributions in the independence wars. It would also seem that the fictionalized Bolívar's betrayal of his black brethren is an indictment on the very real cases of many Latin American mixed-race Afro-descendants' refusal to acknowledge their African ancestry. The Spanish American castes systems worked upwards and downwards, giving free mulattos and mestizos nominal social and economic access that was impossible for "pure" blacks and Amerindians while at the same time denying white creoles certain political rights for not being born in the Iberian Peninsula, reinforcing the questioning of Bolívar's contradictory decision. As for the term "liberty", this of course is the narrative common throughout all of the Americas during the colonial struggles, including the United States. This signifier, in this sense, took on two different meanings in the Americas: one that created an exception for the rule (the exclusion of blacks and Amerindians in this discourse) and the transcendent definition that is inclusive of all humanity, not just one particular cultural or ethnic group. *Changó*, in this case, is forced to come to terms with the re-writing of

“liberty” as a result of the negrophobia that is especially present during post-Haitian independence. At the very least, by choosing Simón Bolívar as one of his combatants, Changó establishes that black struggles for liberation are not to be confused with race wars, otherwise many slaves would have never agreed to fight alongside white soldiers in the Americas. This Changó demands that New World blacks fight for their freedom and citizenship as Americans who are of African descent. Naturally, that would require New World blacks to live under conditions that are unlike Africa, or even Europe. As is the case throughout the novel, Zapata represents this struggle for citizenship as an arduous and, at times, a nearly insurmountable task.

Counterpoints to a Counterpoint: Representations of Acculturation, Deculturation, and Retro-Transculturation in *Changó, el gran putas*

The efforts of New World blacks and Amerindians (as well as a countless number of ethnic and gender-specific “others”) to gain citizenship in the Americas have often been undermined by active efforts to ensure the unattainability of such rights by an array of hegemonic forces (legislators, think tanks, religious leaders, etc.) that often reinforce social hierarchies despite even the most pronounced efforts of acculturation, or assimilation to a cultural “ideal”. In Latin America, efforts to achieve “progress” and modernity often included the ideological or biological “whitening” of national geographic and social spaces through European immigration, criminalization of African and Amerindian cultural elements, extermination projects, or miscegenation between white males and light-skinned females. Despite efforts of acculturation by the “others”

involved in those processes, “pure” whiteness was still unattainable and therefore they were treated as second-class citizens despite what actions were taken. In the United States, Native American children were forced to learn English in early American assimilation projects and blacks, obviously, faced post-Civil War “black codes”, despite their emancipation from slavery⁴⁶. Even as generations of blacks fought wars on behalf of their governments of their respective nations, the benefits were not reciprocated.

One of the most prominent features in *Changó* is the representation of the constant denial and non- recognition of the citizenship and contributions of blacks in the Americas despite their efforts to attain this right, even after assimilating to hegemonic Western cultural traditions and values. Examples of these efforts to undermine the “other” as a second-class citizen or eliminate him or her literally from the public narrative are frequent in the novel, both historical and fictional. I limit this discussion to the stories of the fictional character Agne Brown, José Prudencio Padilla, and the dissident Joseph Stephens, Jr.

The protagonist in “Los ancestros combatantes”, the chapter on *Changó* which takes place in the United States of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, is Agne Brown, a black woman who becomes a professor of Pan-African Studies at Columbia University⁴⁷. She

⁴⁶ See the section on the Black Indian Scouts and the Buffalo Soldiers. Also see Chapter 1.1, in which I elaborate on the representation of black and indigenous participation in the Ecuador-Peruvian border wars. To offer an immediate example of disenfranchisement of soldiers of color, black and white US troops were often segregated during World War I.

⁴⁷ Antonio D. Tillis cites that some critics interpret Agne Brown as a fictional representation of Angela Davis in *Manuel Zapata Olivella and the “Darkening” of Latin American Literature*. I see this as a possibility since Davis was also a professor at a prestigious institution (University of California- Los Angeles) who was the subject of then-California governor’s Ronald Reagan’s suspicions of being both a communist and an inflammatory subversive voice in higher education. Also, the constant presence of the

has lived a particularly unsettling existence: she is a witness to her biological father's murder at the hands of a lynch mob in the South and is later adopted by a white preacher. A combination of visits by black Ancestors and larger-than-life Afro-American figures as well as experiences with both subtle (her college professor's Eurocentric and positivist study of African civilization as a crude and rudimentary culture) and explicit (rejection by certain members of Reverend Robert's family, accusations of being a prostitute, etc.) forms of racism drive her towards acknowledgement and validation of her African ancestry.

In the chapter entitled "Los combatientes ancestros," which uses the virulent racism of Jim Crow United States as a backdrop, Agne Brown sees her biological father hanged by a lynch mob in the U.S South and is adopted by Reverend Robert, a white religious leader who is originally from Kansas. As her stay with Reverend Robert is prolonged, she becomes unsure of her identity. In fact, she recalls that, for a long time, she considered herself a white girl since she attended school and lived in an area in which she was the only black girl and was adopted by a white man. Later in the chapter, however, her doubts about her origins are affirmed during a conversation between Robert and his sister Harriet; upon hearing the reverend proclaim that Agne is his daughter, Harriet responds, "--¡Deja a esa Negra! Las muchachas del servicio se ocuparán de señarle su lugar" (*Changó* 357). Here, several notions about the assimilation of blacks into white society are questioned, and to some extent, discredited. Reverend Robert,

prison in Agne's life experiences (she is incarcerated, as well as her significant other Joe Stephens) is something of note in relation to this particular interpretation since Angela Davis also sought to abolish what she calls "prison industrial complex", the frequent incarceration of American marginalized groups (namely black males) for use in cheap labor.

despite his affectionate efforts to raise a socially “decent” Protestant Christian girl who and integrates into a white school, comes to the realization that, in spite of those efforts to create this “upstanding” citizen, his adopted daughter’s color still marks her social caste. Robert, through his brand of Christianity, attempts to forge a spiritual bond between blacks and whites, contrary to an immense number of Euro-Americans in the South and Midwest who justify white supremacy through biblical scriptures. His devotion to this project results in a cold reception from individuals such as his sister. Agne’s situation is simply the latest representation in *Changó* of a cycle of such double standards that are inherent in Anglo America, but also in Latin America. Earlier in the novel, “O Aleijadinho”, the renowned Brazilian sculptor, speaks of his father’s elation of finally producing a son of full European ancestry. Aleijadinho explains that since he had a black mother he could not gain access to a leadership position in the Brazilian Catholic Church, despite being raised by his father and white stepmother and as a Catholic. In this sense, Agne Brown is part of a new generation who is suffering a centuries-old problem that is difficult to resolve even when the “other” is completely immersed in the acculturating agent’s traditions. As a university scholar, Agne will experience academic denials of black contribution and citizenship from the same person who has taught her.

Agne recalls her days as a student assistant to Dr. Harrington, a professor who expresses uninformed and subtly racist views of blacks in the Americas and Africa. Although he claims to be a scholar of world cultures who appreciates the contributions of each within their respective societies, he seemingly aims to discredit, or deculture, Afro-

American cultural achievement and the roles that non-whites have played in the Western nation-building:

--Usted me ha enseñado que las culturas altamente tecnificadas tienen mucho que aprender de los comportamientos del hombre elemental.

--Es incuestionable, entre otras cosas porque los pueblos bárbaros se encuentran rodeados de la naturaleza. Usted no pondrá esto en duda. Pero me pregunto: ¿Por qué precisamente a la filosofía africana primitiva? ¿Por qué precisamente a la africana y no a la romana, polinésica o esquimal? (*Changó* 349)

In response to Harrington's comments, Agne clarifies that as an individual of African descent it is her responsibility to learn more about her ancestry. There is also another point to her new field of interest: she seeks to legitimize Pan-African culture and innovation, long the subjects of ridicule in academia. Through the use of the term "bárbaro" to describe non-Western societies, he, as many other intellectuals before him, imposes the "civilization/barbarism" dichotomy, a worldview that has so often deemed that certain ethnicities and societies (rural and nomadic people, for example) are incapable of producing this notion of "modern culture" and must be changed in order to become more "universal" (westernized). He continues his diatribes, each time less subtle, proclaiming that "no es menos cierto que mis antepasados entre todas las razas han sido los encargados de desarrollar la técnica científica y que esa técnica les confiere poder sobre los otros humanos" (*Changó* 349). He further attempts to discredit other world civilizations by attributing absolutely all technological and scientific innovation to European achievement, ultimately erasing the "other" from historical and social narrative in the Americas as far as their ability to contribute within a Westernized space. This

seems to be an indictment of a ubiquitous academic culture which, certainly in the past and even still, refuses to acknowledge the role of the “other” as a cultural contributor, an issue that is overwhelmingly Pan-American. Later, Agne gets a visit from two particular US Ancestors who, through their very real contributions to US culture, challenge Dr. Harrington’s claims and at the same time are responsible for the renewed social consciousness of the protagonist: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois. Her conversations with these two mammoth historical figures are also symbolic examples of the diversity of ideas and cultural values that exist even within racial or ethnic categories under the same national border. That is, Zapata reminds the reader (and continues to do so in other parts of the novel) that the notion of one absolute cultural value for an entire nation, continent, or ethnicity is an essentialist construct (the notion of “black music”, “Christian values”, etc.). Manuel Zapata Olivella coined the phrase “endo-culturation” to describe this phenomenon. Such cultural differences become evident in Booker T. Washington’s narrative about the Atlanta Compromise:

Mis palabras no fueron, como muchos lo piensan, inspiradas por el desprecio que nunca tuve por la educación académica. Después de mis polémicas con DuBois y otros ekobios intelectuales, en mis madrugadas sin sueño regresaba a las aguas del Níger en busca de la olvidada sabiduría de los ancestros. (*Changó* 368)

In this conversation, Zapata’s Washington not only trumps Harrington’s ideas about the “other’s” absence from the intellectual space, he also cites another point that should not be ignored: even within the same country, blacks (Amerindians and whites, for that matter) are not a homogenous social group and must not be categorized under a singular cultural, political or even religious sphere. Such divisions between Southern and

Northern black intellectuals made this apparent; Washington and DuBois embodied these endo-cultural differences. As many northern urban black intellectuals of his time, DuBois championed a classical education in the arts, sciences, and literature. He also demanded immediate and radical changes in favor of increased civil rights for blacks. For Washington, a former slave in the South, his primary concern was how increase the wealth of rural blacks under the legal framework of the period; a technical education and small steps towards social equality, in this case, were necessary. Such steps towards Southern black progress would occur under post-reconstruction laws which further disenfranchise this ethnic group politically and socially, though their financial capital and technical skills would gradually improve. As for such legislation, Washington's idea was that through working and earning financial capital, blacks would prove to whites that they are responsible citizens and therefore those repressive laws would be relaxed in time, a sentiment that DuBois and most northern intellectuals fervently protested. To further solidify Agne's stance that Afro-American innovation and cultural heterogeneity are very real phenomena that have had direct impact on American nation-building and culture, Washington cites the establishment of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and Granville Woods's invention of a communication system capable of functioning while a train is moving. Washington's monologue, then, validates not only the cultural adaptation and varied forms of black intellectual production, but the hybrid cultural conditions under which these individuals, Northern or Southern, have managed to carry out their ideas and survive. If Washington's examples are not-so-subtle innuendos of black transculturation,

then Agne's cosmic visit with W.E.B DuBois will plainly spell out the terms of this hybrid existence:

Examina tu alma a la luz de dos lámparas y te explicarás la penumbra de tu doble existencia. Nadie, sino tú, escogida por Legba, podrá tener conciencia de tus dos mundos: África viviendo en el alma de América. El destino de nuestra sangre es encender un nuevo renacimiento en el corazón anciano de la humanidad. (*Changó* 421)

DuBois's concept of the double consciousness, which first appears in his essay collection *The Souls of Black Folk*, emphasizes the balance that Americans of African descent attempt to achieve between their national and racial/ethnic identities in a geographic, social, and political plane where they are considered neither one nor the other. This idea demonstrates that, despite the spectre of US segregation, discourses on hybridity was not limited to those on racial and cultural *mestizaje* in many Latin American countries, and in fact appears years before Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo cubano*. Through Agne's conversation with DuBois and the other ancestors of the Diaspora, she becomes increasingly aware of the culturally hybridized state of blacks in all of the Americas, the United States included. Again, Zapata Olivella employs the literary strategy of finding a common experience that transcends temporal, geographical, and cultural differences among Afro-Americans: the fact of citizenship, adjustment, collaboration, confrontation and innovation outside of Africa and with/against other ethnic groups in the process. Agne, an individual who is raised by a Euro-American adopted father, knows very well that while she can never be fully African, she is at least aware of her existence as an American of African descent. She is also aware that, despite any attempts of being

acculturated into the homogenous and “universal” ideal of “American” society, her existence as a person of African ancestry will still frame her as a different social caste: not mulatto, not zambo, not morisco, but black. Despite this, she, as Washington and DuBois, takes advantage of academic system that has frequently discredited “Third-World” cultures and has utilized this Western institution as a tool to learn and teach more about Pan-African America to people of all ethnicities; she has managed to hybridize an institution of higher learning by becoming a professor, plainly contradicting Harrington’s claims. Zapata Olivella also makes it clear that New World blacks have attempted to earn their citizenship and visibility through another major avenue: the battlefield. The representations of these individuals in the novel highlight one of the significant problems with such a strategy: very few times after participation in these wars have those promises of citizenship been realized.

One of the commonalities among New World blacks since the colonies’ wars for independence against their sovereign nations is the Afro-American participation in those battles, whether by force or voluntarily. In a number of these wars, black soldiers had either been promised manumission from slavery, additional civil rights, or nothing at all. Many of those wars in which they participated were projects of land consolidation from the Amerindians or missions to occupy other countries. The results of this active participation often yielded disastrous results for black soldiers: high mortality rates, returns to slavery, a return home to poverty as a result of receiving little-to-none of the

compensation promised by the individuals who solicited their services⁴⁸. A majority of these soldiers sought citizenship in their respective nations and fell short of these goals.

Zapata Olivella makes it a case in *Changó, el gran putas* to represent these failed attempts at citizenship and their oft-devastating consequences through both historical and fictional examples of such actions. As in Aldaberto Ortiz's representation of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border war, Zapata questions the idea of nation-building in relationship to the welfare of New World blacks and Amerindians. One particular literary strategy that Zapata Olivella employs is the repetition of events through geographic and temporal space; in such as strategy stresses the oft-repeated negative consequences that this form of nation-building has had on New World blacks and Amerindians (I discuss the latter in section 2.3) historically throughout the Americas. José Prudencio Padilla's narration of his arrest and execution after participating in the South American independence wars, the story of the fictional character Joseph Stephens's tour of duty in World War I, and his son's protests against the Vietnam War suggest a pattern of this use-and-abuse paradigm utilized by American armed forces continually. The representation of Haiti's bid for independence through the narrative voices of *Changó* serves as an example of the vilification of an entire nation because of its status as a black republic.

⁴⁸ George Reid Andrews cites the example of the *libertos* (black and mulatto soldiers who volunteered to fight in the Spanish American independence wars). "Though comprehensive studies of slave losses during the wars remain to be done, it is clear that many slaves died before completing their enlistments. Of the 2,000 to 3,000 Argentine *libertos* who crossed the Andes into Chile with San Martín in 1817, fewer than 150 returned with him in 1823, after six years of campaigning through Chile, Peru, and Ecuador... Well into the 1840s and 1850s, crippled black veterans begging in the streets were a common sight in Buenos Aires- as in Lima, Caracas, Cali, and other cities" (Andrews 62). The theme of jobless and impoverished returned soldiers is a significant one in *He visto la noche*, a semi-autobiographical novel in the form of a travelogue first written by Zapata in 1947 after his travels through the United States.

In the chapter “José Prudencio Padilla: Guerras ajenas que parecen nuestras”, Padilla, a prominent Latin American historical figure who both served and fought against Spain’s naval forces, recalls his military career, his experiences with British and Spanish-American brands of racial discrimination, and his execution at the command of Simón Bolívar. These events will lead him to question the varying definitions of citizenship that are presented to him throughout his campaign as a military officer of African and Amerindian descent. He recounts his mistreatment as a prisoner of war at the hands of British naval officers:

Desde el primer día me escogen para limpiar el retrete de la patrulla de guardia. Alegué mi grado de contramaestre y la respuesta fue un baño de orines a la cara. Un negro en ninguna pulgada cuadrada del imperio inglés y menos en la Gran Bretaña, tiene el derecho a ser tratado como un hombre. (*Changó* 250)

Although he recalls constant discrimination amongst his own shipmates for being an individual of African descent, he cites that he is at least not recognized as a slave by Spanish cohorts. He also reminds the lector that, “igual que cualquier inglés o español, podía ufanarme de un abuelo blanco” (*Changó* 250). Despite this shared European ancestry with the same men who treat him as second-class citizen, he learns that skin color and ethnicity are independent entities from the perspective of the people who threaten to sell him to slavery. He does, however, recognize at least one white European who acknowledges his shared humanity with his prisoners: Thomas Clarkson, the British abolitionist. He later recalls, upon his return from Spain, the increasing conflict between the Spanish crown and the creole aristocrats in Nueva Granada concerning the rights of individuals born in the Americas. Padilla explains that, in such an atmosphere,

there was an opportunity to cite another war for independence: the one which Haiti had just won. Due to his experience of nearly being sold to slavery, such a victory was a personal one since it was the first time that a republic in the Americas had proclaimed full citizenship to former black slaves and put into question the definition of “freedom” as described by national elites throughout the colonies. This first attempt at citing the importance of fighting “contra Fernando VII y todas las formas de esclavitud” (*Changó* 257) falls to deaf ears as one of his superiors asks him to leave “la libertad de los esclavos a nuestra conciencia y cumplamos ahora el deber de combater por nuestra autonomía con lealtad al Rey” (257). Although he participates in a war that never results in the instant emancipation of slavery (despite the involvement of Haitian soldiers!) post-war, Padilla never lets his concern for the citizenship of blacks in Gran Colombia subside. This, he explains, will be the idea for which he will be vilified:

La libertad absoluta e inmediata de los esclavos, tantas veces prometida, se redujo a una simple rebaja de azotes. Mis protestas son consideradas como una amenaza de levantamiento contra la República. La sentencia a muerte está firmada. Desde ahora ya guindo de la horca después de ser vilmente asesinado. Quienes se dicen mis amigos, endulzan su rechazo. (*Changó* 279)

Here, Padilla exposes one of the major fears that the Spanish American creole aristocrats have had since the independence of Haiti: the perceived threat of a race war. Because that black republic was born from the armed struggles of former slaves against white (and mulatto) plantation owners, a new culture of horror had been fostered amongst slaveholder throughout the Americas, especially in Gran Colombia. This is a region of South America where blacks, mulattos, and mestizos are an oppressed majority who did

not instantly see their emancipations and had more motivation than ever to publicly question their status as slaves/denizens. This position, unfortunately for Padilla, had been taken by the ruling class of Gran Colombia. As a consequence, his questioning of the hegemonic definition of “liberty” was vilified, ironically, as a sign of virulent and hostile racism towards the rest of the country and results in his execution. The non-recognition and/or vilification of black participants in American war efforts in this novel is represented as a multi-generational offense, as Zapata repeats this paradigm in future temporal, geographic and cultural spaces. In the fifth part of the work, “Los ancestros combatientes”, this occurs in the 20th century United States and encompasses two generations of black soldiers, Joseph Stephens and his son Joe Jr., who have been either wiped from official history or vilified as dissenters.

One of the most prominent themes of this section of the novel is the frequent lack of recognition or vilification of black soldiers who have served in the United States armed forces, a sector of government that saw some of the most blatant racism against Afro-American servicemen in the late 19th and early 20th century. Ange Brown, along with “Tía” Ann, a widow, narrate the story of the latter’s husband, who served in World War I and was seldom heard from. “Tía” Ann begins this story by telling of her experience at a dispatch center in Atlanta while waiting for news from Joseph, her husband. She speaks of the last letter that she received from him, written in Paris, in a mail station that was racially segregated. Her frustration with the second class treatment that she received from white Americans, coupled with the lack of response from the US

Army, eventually provoke her to protest by wearing all black to the dispatch station.

Agne articulates “Tía” Ann’s frustrations through her own voice:

Para entonces ya discernías con que la Guerra Mundial ha sido terriblemente injusta con la “Tía” Ann: le arrebató a su Joseph y su hijo Joe tiene que abandonar los estudios. Has aprendido mucho de ella para saber que su callado pero persistente espíritu batallador heredaba una vieja rebeldía. (*Changó* 464)

As a result of the absence of Joseph, presumed dead, “Tía” Ann ends up a single mother living in poverty raising a son who becomes more frustrated as he develops a consciousness of the discrimination that he and other blacks suffer despite the fact that his father has served a country in which racial segregation and housing discrimination are sanctioned practices. The reader is constantly reminded of this pattern as a result of past historical references to the destitution and disenfranchisement other black soldiers and their families have suffered, reinforcing the evidence of a constant double standard: José Prudencio Padilla’s execution for treason, the non-recognition of the Black Seminoles as United States citizens or as a Native American ethnic group, Haiti’s vilification for gaining independence as a black state. Joseph, after serving a stint in jail for using his knife against three white men who attacked him in the street, will make several attempts to find an identity which was robbed from him as a child; one of those attempts is not his obliged duty as a to the Navy, which is one of the stipulations for his release from prison. He voices his frustration with his circumstances by declaring that, “me acompaña la orden de custodia del Juez, la fianza del Ejército por la cual se me obliga a combatir,

como a mi padre, por una “libertad” que nunca hemos conocido”⁴⁹ (*Changó* 456). Again, another narrative voice exclaims his frustration with the word “liberty”, a loaded referent which has taken on a different meaning in the construction of American nation-states. Never forgetting the poverty that blacks and other destitute peoples have suffered as a result of a national structure that actively denies liberty, he acts as a dissident voice for his silenced father. Just as Agne Brown converses with the “*sombras*” (shadow-spirits) of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois to confirm her interest in Afro-American intellectual production, the shadow of another historical figure visits Joe: Paul Robeson. This figure, a celebrated American black athlete/singer/actor who was an active participant in protests against, among other things, fascism in Spain, European imperialism of Africa, and US Jim Crow laws, was vilified as a communist spy and blacklisted by the United States government despite his fundraising campaigns for the World War II war effort. He is the most poignant reminder of the country’s contradictory nature. At the same time, Robeson’s visit sparks Joe’s spirit of subversion. Stephens becomes an active protester of the Vietnam War to assert his dissatisfaction with the incongruent relationship that the US has with its black (as well as Native American, poor white, Latino, and Asian American) soldiers. His dissent yields predictable results, however, as he is thrown in prison for dodging the draft. He, as his father, is sent to oblivion by the federal government; his prisoner identification number is 000000. More than that, unlike his father, he is also vilified for refusing the same fate as his father by

⁴⁹ This is not the first time that the dissident intellectual-activist archetype appears in a Manuel Zapata Olivella novel. *Máximo*, the protagonist in *Chambacú, corral de negros*, actively protests against the United States’ intervention in Afro-Colombian communities by soliciting military bodies for the US-Korean War.

entering a war for an institution that has abused generations of black men through scant recognition as honorable members of the nation for which they represented in war.

Mythical-Historical Representations of the Black-Indigenous Relationship in the New World

The relationship between New World blacks and Amerindians throughout the Americas has been a varied and complicated one since contact between the two ethnic groups in the colonial periods. These relationships have ranged from collaborative, to confrontational, to neutral, and to mythical (in the absence of one of the two groups from a geographic space). While Manuel Zapata Olivella seemingly represents the collaborative relationship in a combination of mythical and historical form of narrative, in *Changó el gran putas*, he certainly does not omit the conflictive element between New World Blacks and Amerindians. As a student of Pan-American culture studies, he recognizes the necessity of representing these nuanced contacts with due complexity and ambiguity. Such a project is difficult to carry out without representing these relationships on a Pan-American scale and with a great amount of creative literary innovation.

Zapata Olivella frequently utilizes a narrative strategy in which he writes in a mythical or romanticized connection between the New World blacks and indigenous Americans. He establishes this pattern early in the scenes that involve the movement of black slaves across the Atlantic Ocean. After a takeover of a ship by the part of the slaves who were on board, there is a turbulent landing on the Caribbean islands. Nagó, one of the participants in this struggle as well as one of the most prominent spiritual

ancestors in the novel, delivers the mythical first American of African descent, to which the ancestral “mother”, Sosa Illamba, gives birth. After the crash-landing, nearly all the slaves perish, therefore making the newborn *Muntu* (child of African descent) a direct orphan to Africa. This event is not the only one which makes him an Afro- American:

Entre la algarabía de los pericos las mujeres indias esperaban al Muntu en la playa para amamantarlo con su leche. Suavemente humedezco su cuerpo con saliva para atezarle la cuerda de sus huesos. Y suelto, nadó solo, en busca del nuevo destino que le había trazado Changó. (*Changó* 91)

Nagó symbolically sends off the newborn to the Arawak women so that he will be nourished enough to survive not only in the short term, but to prepare for a life as black in the New World. Africa is a place that is distant to this child, as is demonstrated by an African man passing him off to a group of people he does not know who are from a land that has yet to be known. The child, through suckling from the breasts of the indigenous women, gains a surrogate mother in the Americas just moments after being born to an African one. Through this scene, Zapata Olivella begins writing an alliance between blacks and Amerindians that remains constant throughout the novel. Some of these alliances occur in the apparent absence of one of the two ethnic groups.

I have already cited the example of the “Relatos de Nagó” that introduces the chapter “José María Morelos: El llamado de los ancestros olmecas”, in which Zapata makes a mythical connection between the creation of the African gods and the existence of the Olmec civilization in Mesoamerica. In “Rebelión de los Vodús”, Boukman’s vow

to avenge the Arawak who once inhabited Haiti represents the cosmic relationship between the blacks and physically absent indigenous population:

Aliados los Ancestros Xemes y Vodús
El indio y el negro
Por la sangre unidos
Por la sangre unidos
Por la muerte inmortales
La tierra y sus hijos vengarán. (*Changó* 187)

Here, Bouckman includes the Arawak people in the pantheon of the Ancestors, the dead combatants who assist Changó in his mission to liberate enslaved peoples throughout the Americas, not only Afro-Americans. While the indigenous population on the island may be lost, the slaves brought there to replace their labor represent them as the new “Indians” of the land. The name of this black republic, Haiti, clearly exemplifies this cosmic bond with the deceased indigenous peoples. There is also another very Amerindian presence among the Haitians that has to do directly with the invocation of Changó: the use of tobacco. Zapata explicitly highlights this feature of Vodou ritual that did not previously exist in West African religious traditions. When Zapata’s Henri Christophe asks the *papaloo* to invoke Ogún, the orisha of metalwork and war, the latter “le paraliza la vista vomitándole a los ojos el humo de su tabaco” (*Changó* 193). This Amerindian religious item seemingly offers the mystical bridge that these African gods require to communicate to their black combatants on the island. In *Changó*, the *orisha* become intimately involved with the rebellion against the mulatto and white slaveholders, eventually guiding the subversive slaves to an unprecedented victory. It appears that Zapata Olivella attempts to ensure that the reader does not forget the indigenous cosmic and spiritual

contribution to the exploits of the current island inhabitants, despite their extermination. He also makes an effort to highlight the black-indigenous alliance in the United States, a country where the relationship between these ethnic groups was somewhat more complicated and convoluted than the rest of the Americas. While certainly Afro-Amerindian alliances existed and were well-documented, the institution of black slavery was not limited to white-owned plantations. I argue that, in order for Zapata's representation of the Black-Seminole alliance to maintain the persistent cosmic bond that is present in other examples, this relationship would have to be far more romanticized than the others.

In *Changó*, Zapata entertains the romantic black-indigenous alliance paradigm through his representation of one of the most enduring historical examples of such collaboration in the United States, as well as some of the contradictions of this relationship⁵⁰: the Black-Seminole alliance. This North American alliance is also the point in the novel where this shared black-indigenous cosmovision is literally and symbolically severed. I argue that in Zapata's representation of the broken relationship between New World blacks and Amerindians in this part of the Americas is an attempt to

⁵⁰ Thomas A. Britten, in *A Brief history of the Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts* (1999), provides an excellent historical analysis of the complex relationships between runaway black slaves and several Native American tribes, primarily the Seminoles. United States black-Amerindian relationships were often ambiguous as a result of the presence of various forms of slavery practiced by some Native Americans, including the Seminoles. Nevertheless, those runaway slaves allied with the Seminoles in constant armed resistance (the weapons provided by Spanish colonists) against English colonists seeking to expand in the South. The Black-Seminole tribes moved as far south as Mexico and, as a consequence, this would be the justification of the United States government to deny recognition of black members of the group US citizenship (they were considered Mexican citizens) and Indian territories (they were considered a separate "race" from the Seminoles because of their African ancestry) despite their service to the United States Armed Forces as Black Indian Scouts.

demonstrate a uniquely North American culture of division and racism that was capable of weakening a potentially triumphant alliance for that continent's downtrodden.

In the section "Los ancestros combatantes", Zaka, runaway slave from the Carolinas who joins the Seminole tribe in a fight against Anglo-American expansionism, recounts his days as an ally of the leader Wild Cat, who eventually brought a large number of Black Seminoles with him to northern Mexico. Similar to Bouckman's vow to avenge the eradication of the indigenous populations in the Caribbean, he uses spoken verse to recall his experiences rebelling against slavers:

Cuando se juntan
El Seminola
Y el Negro,
El Hombre Blanco
El Hombre Blanco
Pierde el sueño. (*Changó* 353-54)

Here, Zaka makes an oral testimony to this alliance born out of resistance, much like Bouckman. He appears to emphasize the solid foundation of this new cross-cultural cooperation by his repetition of "El Hombre Blanco" to represent the dual threat of the Amerindian and the Black to the oppression suffered by both groups. In the first line of the spoken verse, he seems to hint at the archetype for establishing a resistance against marginalization for any downtrodden people: through maintaining the strength of an alliance. Zaka also cites collaboration with the Spaniards, who offered the Seminoles and runaway slaves the firearms to strengthen their resistance, thus forging a tri-ethnic alliance that transcends race. His mention of Black Seminole collaboration with the

Spaniards also juxtaposes two mythical images of American colonialism: Anglo-American white supremacy (the absolute segregation of the African, Amerindian, and the European) and Spanish American cultural *mestizaje* (African-Amerindian-European intermingling). As in the example of the shared black-indigenous cosmovision in Haiti, Zaka makes it a case to commit to memory the contribution of the Seminoles to black liberation early in the history of the United States. Unlike Haiti, these maroon communities had living and active Amerindian allies against slavers and expansionists. This alliance eventually engenders a new Afro-American culture in the Southern United States and Northern Mexico: the Black Seminoles. They constitute one of the most substantial resistance groups in North American history, until the point that the US government offers amnesty and land to the black members of the tribe in the post- Civil War consolidation wars against the Native Americans. Zaka explains to Agne Brown that, for the opportunity to return to the United States, some Black Seminoles participated in Indian removal.

Zaka recalls the development of the Black Seminole Indian Scouts, a troop comprised of Afro-American members of the Seminole tribe who had served as border forces for the Mexican government. Certain changes in the United States, however, would lure some Black Seminoles away from their Amerindian allies. The abolition of slavery in the United States, coupled with an offer by the US government of a land grant in exchange for policing the southwest, would lead many Black Seminoles to return to the Northern side of the border with the possibility of finally becoming citizens in their place of birth. Zaka points to this turn of events as not only another set of promises to

the Black Seminoles, but also as a detriment to their long-time allies. United States blacks in the South found themselves dealing with repressive Reconstruction-era laws and heightened racism. These soldiers would be the men who serve on the frontlines in removal and policing missions against Native American tribes inhabiting the US-Mexican Border and the Southwest. Their mission would be the following:

¿Quién iba a pensar, Agne Brown, que llegaría el día en que nuestros propios hermanos zambos, azuzados, confundidos, engañados, vestirían el uniforme militar de las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos para combatir a sus propios hermanos Negros hacinados en tugurios o asesinar a los hermanos Indios en sus propios reductos? (*Changó* 477)

As I mentioned, it appears that the representation of this severance of black-indigenous alliance in *Changó* is symbolic because of the reiteration of the emerging culture of North American racism in this part of the novel. Zaka's questioning of why some Black Seminoles abandoned their Amerindian allies reflects on the implications of the ubiquitous divide-and-conquer political strategy of United States powerbrokers. The irony of this deception is that the abolition of slavery by laws that have always been unjust to American blacks is used as an opportunity to divide a powerful cross-cultural faction of resistance and at the same time disenfranchise the Black Seminoles. In Zapata's writing of the discrimination that the Black Seminoles would face, their choices to earn citizenship through the avenues of the United States Government were never to be trusted. This major black-indigenous alliance seems to symbolically end the chain of Zapata's portrayals of cosmic relationships between the two ethnicities throughout the novel. It seems that, through the decision of some of the Black Seminoles to join the

Scouts, *Changó* foreshadows an unprecedented brand of American division: Jim Crow.

As the Scouts try to assimilate into United States cultural norms as a result of the nominal emancipation of black slaves, they soon discover that the nation is simply preparing for a modified culture of racism which oppresses people of color at the same levels of official slavery.

Britten's history of the same seems to suggest more of the same. First, the Black Seminole Scouts were considered by the United States a separate race and ethnicity from their Amerindian brethren, therefore even if they were considered US citizens, they would be disenfranchised anywhere in the South, including in Indian Territory. Secondly, these officials justified their denial of land grants to Black Seminoles by stating that the reservations were strictly for those tribes which were recognized by the United States government.

Changó provides a portrayal of a major rift between black and indigenous alliances in a geographical area which that cross-cultural relationship was possibly the most confounding of any in the Americas. He seemingly reminds the reader that even in the most intimate of cooperative relationships, there is always a point in which two parties can be divided. For many of the Black Seminoles of *Changó* and the actual historical figures, the prospects of finally becoming citizens in a country that had always been known to them as an agent of alienation and disenfranchisement was that point. They ended up in an enduring state of destitution.

Conclusion

Zapata's representations of the New World blacks' transculturation, involvement in nation-building, and struggles for recognition as cultural contributors and full citizens in the Americas often involve the constant interaction between supernatural, mythical, historical, and fictional figures from different geographic, social, temporal and cultural spaces. Often, the supernatural forces (Changó, Elegba, Yemayá, the ancestral shadows, etc.) have very human qualities and are as immersed in the aforementioned transformational processes as the earthly combatants struggling for recognition and citizenship in the novel. Zapata also makes it a case to stress the constant romantic, mythical, and cosmic Afro-Amerindian alliances in the novel, which are at times based off of actual historical collaborations and relationships between the two ethnic groups. The presence of the Ancestors and their conversations with the protagonists is of major importance since they remind the *muntu* (earthly combatants against oppression and non-recognition) of past instances of positive and varied contributions by blacks in the Americas that have been discredited, vilified, or not recognized at all. In order for this novel to effectively represent a common Pan-American black experience (or simply a Pan-American experience) on such a grand scale and at the same time function as a literary creation, the intimate involvement amongst dead, living, human, divine, African, Afro-American, Amerindian, Euro-American, ethnically mixed, historical, mythical, and fictional figures appears to be an innovation that is necessary. This work would be hard pressed to function simply as a historical, social, realist, or completely fictional text since those textual representations are seemingly too limited for such an epic creative work that

also takes to task highlighting the shared implications of African, European, and Amerindian cultural contact and its role in defining nation and the national citizen in the Americas.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS A REEVALUATION OF “OTHERNESS”, NATIONHOOD, AND “LITERARY TRANSCULTURATION”

In this chapter, I will return to issues such as the portrayal of the interracial relationship and the resultant ambivalent feelings of the participants toward one another (Chapter 1), as well as the question of political borders as superficial markers of nationality and community (Chapters 1 and 2, individually). In order to expand on those ideas through, I will make a comparative analysis of the treatment those themes in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and an earlier work of Manuel Zapata Olivella: *Chambacú, corral de negros*. In section one, I engage the question of reciprocated “otherness”, which I define as the simultaneous fetish, eroticization, or rarifying of the “other’s” body or cultural values by two parties who imagine each other as new and strange phenomena with which they have had little or no contact. The second section considers the questioning of the political border as an imagined and often undermined marker of cultural difference in each work. The final section deals with the possible stylistic and thematic influence that literature representing events such as the Mexican Revolution (*Los de abajo*, for instance) has on *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú*. While each of these sections deals with seemingly independent issues, I argue that these events are intimately connected through frequent border-crossing (racially, regionally, internationally, ideologically, culturally,

literarily, etc.), transculturation (the exchange of cultural values, development of cultural spaces independent from national borders, and, in the case of the authors of the works in question, transnational innovative influences), and the notion of the national in dialogue with the global (indicators of citizenship and the issue of realizing “national” literature independent from outside influence).

The Transculturation of the Female “Other” and Reciprocated “Otherness”

One of the most visible forms of transculturation seems to be that of the interracial contact between two members of the opposite sex (and, in many cases, the same sex). Often, in literature or simply through the eyes of an outside observer of the “other”, the eroticization and fetishism of the latter is a frequent reaction to a “new” body from an already “unknown” cultural and ethnic group. Claudette Williams cites an extensive list of Spanish Caribbean poetry in which the representations of these interracial relationships are overwhelmingly between white males and hyper-sexualized black/*mulata* women⁵¹. These sexual fantasies about the “other” often manifest themselves once that observer re-evaluates his/her values of beauty in relationship to men/women of their ethnic group. A subject which I entertained briefly in Chapter 1 was the portrayal of black male characters’ attitudes towards both women of their own race and towards those of other ethnicities. Specifically, I proposed ideas about Ascensión Lastre’s reaction to what I will call the “female other” or the “rarified other”. That is, I discussed his relationships with women of the three primary ethnic groups represented in

⁵¹ *Charcoal and Cinnamon* (2000) engages the constant portrayal of black and mulatto women as often dangerous elements of society who tempt white men with their apparently supernatural sexual powers and witchcraft.

Juyungo in terms of their impact on his development of a cross-cultural consciousness. I proposed that Lastre's interactions with women of African, Amerindian, and European ancestry demonstrate his stronger sense of national consciousness. I categorize Afrodita in the latter category since she is, unlike a large number of black characters in the novel, an educator without the benefit of quality resources. The other two women, Pancha and María de los Ángeles, complete this paradigm. As I mentioned, he spends little time with Pancha as a result of the gradually increasing distance that the Cayapa tribe keeps from him yet she seemingly is the one reason he feels a strong solidarity towards the Amerindian throughout the text.

His longest, as well as the most ambiguous, relationship is with María, a white woman. The initial contact, for Lastre, is seemingly an opportunity to sexually humiliate a female of a race that he perceives as an oppressor. This sexual conquest somehow evolves into a marriage, which provokes ambivalent feelings between love and hate shared by both characters. This psychological/emotional ambivalence not only seems to be a constant subject in Ortiz's work, but also in at least two of Zapata's, including *Changó*. The other work is *Chambacú, corral de negros*, in which a Swedish woman, Inge, weds with José Raquél, the brother of the protagonist Máximo as well as his eventual antagonist. In *Changó*, the "rarified other" seems to be Agne Brown as she is raised by a white reverend who attempts to integrate her into his family and community, with overwhelmingly little success. This, however, is not the reception which I will discuss in this section. I am interested, in this case, in the reactions of the female

characters in question (María and Inge) towards their interracial relationships and the new communities to which they have to adjust.

I have already gone into much detail about Lastre's feelings towards María. However, it may be appropriate to at least discuss María's views on having a sexual relationship with him. If Lastre is thinking about sexually conquering this white woman, María also creates her own image of this black male "other"; "...sobre todo sentía cierta curiosidad primitiva y femenina por este negro alto y fuerte, de diáfana risa y dientes perfectos, a diferencia de los suyos" (*Juyungo* 140). Here, María emphasizes his physical attributes, crafted by manual labor. The narrator portrays her as an individual who has an equally fetishized imagination of the black body. This scene evokes images of a literary archetype that is more familiar in North American discourse on black masculinity: the "black buck"⁵². María seems fixed mostly on Lastre's raw and "natural" physicality, somehow indicating enormous sexual prowess. The narrator is also quick to highlight the fact that María's "padre y abuelo habían salido de cacería" (*Juyungo* 140). She no longer seems to have the immediate social surveillance that Carlos Hiraldo suggests is the result of the historic Pan-American "dread of potential mingling among economic and racial levels in an imagined and feared world where individuals accept and act upon their desires" (Hiraldo 50). Lastre is the embodiment of that perceived danger to national order: a sexually endowed, working-class, black male who is left unsupervised and capable of carrying out those desires. There is another matter worth mentioning here.

⁵² Esther Everem approaches the issue of "black romance", as it is portrayed in films in the 1990s. She cited the presence of the asexual black female ("mammy", "one of the guys", etc), the dark-skinned sexual attraction versus the light-skinned love interest, and the "black buck", a long-enduring racial stereotype about the hypersexuality of black males.

The narrator's reference to her imperfect teeth seems to suggest that she is either poor or not as beautiful as Lastre imagines her to be. Ascensión's fetish, then, seems to be simply her white skin whereas her latent fantasy is a combination of skin tone and physical perfection. Even in her relationship with Lastre, María is never completely comfortable around him. To her, his anger towards whites presents a legitimate threat:

Invadió a María de los Ángeles un agudo temor por Lastre, y se acercó a él que, a pesar de sentirse mirado, no respondía. El remanente de odio que para los blancos conservaba, tornaba a removerse. Sería capaz de acabar con todos los blancos del campamento. ¿Y después? Bueno, el monte siempre es grande, y él lo conocía. ¿Pero no era blanca, también, la piel de su mujer? Sí, pero era su mujer. (*Juyungo* 180)

Ascensión's activism against the national elites, which happen to be mostly white, continues to disturb María. As Lastre seemingly protests for improved wages and treatment of the field workers, María cannot shake the feeling that his energy seems devoted to starting a race war. For her, it is not the first time that Lastre has intended to conquer whites: she was the one of the subjects of this project. She, as Lastre, is never able to completely overcome the question of race in his petitions for social improvement for the national destitute (which happens to be overwhelmingly black and Amerindian). Such a turn of events, in her mind, could easily engender a dangerous situation for her. She imagines Lastre and the workers as an embodiment of black rage, yet she is in love with this potential threat to her well-being. While she holds ambivalent attitudes towards Afro-Ecuadorian cultural production and values, during her stay with Lastre and a mostly black cohort she seems more aware of the transcultural mingling of African, Amerindian,

and European ethnic groups. For example, she attends a party in which Crispulo Cangá, one of Lastre's closest friends and a skilled musician, plays the marimba:

María de los Ángeles demoró un poco para adaptarse a esta música tan rara, y aunque no la sentía, vio que a su marido le gustaba, y que muchos de los pasos eran conocidos y vulgares. Por lo que se animó a bailar con un negrito de trasero estrecho y empinado. (*Juyungo* 295)

She finds comfort in the fact that this Afro-Ecuadorian musical production is not as alien from her own as she had previously feared. María recognizes that this popular music form is the result of cultural hybridization, with instruments and rhythms deriving from three principal ethnic groups of which Ecuador is comprised. Understanding this, perhaps she realizes that her husband and his friends have little separatist motive in demanding equal treatment. Certainly, she seems cognizant that she is not experiencing a culture completely separate from what she knows. Ortiz seemingly attempts to dispel the notion that Lastre's sexual domination is not a feat of defeating class inequalities but is an imagined racial victory. The only other major character who seems to associate María's whiteness as a sign of beauty or power is Antonio Angulo, who is never able to overcome his inferiority complex for being dark-skinned and prefers white women due to what he claims is the result of endemic white supremacy; in his mind, a woman's skin color absolutely indicates her class. In *Chambacú*, the portrayal of the interracial relationship and the female "other's" reaction to her new environs is much more bilateral in nature.

José Raquel, who becomes the main antagonist of his activist brother Máximo in *Chambacú*, upon returning from the Korean War with Inge, his Swedish wife, seemingly brings her to impoverished Chambacú as a sign of “classing out”, or showing her off as a symbol of prestige. He recalls his time Sweden to his Chambacuer friends in a bar:

Pero esto de la sueca, no fue en Corea sino en Suecia. Otro día les contaré de ese hermoso país donde las mujeres blancas se mueren por los negros. Miren, la cosa no está en ser blanco o negro, lo que pasa es que el hombre es hombre y la mujer es mujer. Y todos queremos probar el plato ajeno. ¡Eso es todo! (*Chambacú* 60)

It seems that his primary sentiment of pride in marrying Inge is the fact that he finds her in a place that was unknown to him before, and her Nordic features happen to be a secondary reason. He not only has a white wife, but one from a place which is exotic to the locals: Northern Europe, an area of immensely different climate and cultural values. He also suggests that the intrigue with the exotic/foreign/“other” body is universal, regardless to ethnicity or gender; he appears to reduce Inge to a commodity, like an exotic food. He makes his postwar marriage, transatlantic trip with Inge appear to be a transfer of cargo, an inverse image of the slave trade in the Americas. José Raquel is not the only one who objectifies Inge’s body. Some of the local women begin to dye their hair blonde in reaction to not only seeing Inge’s rarified features, but observing the reactions of the local men to her body, seeking the beauty that is drawing attention from the males. For José Raquel, this last fact is tragic:

La “menor” de las Rudesindas con los cabellos rojos y erizados. Se cansaba de ella. ¿Dónde dejaría sus cachumbos amarrados con tiritas de trapo? Desde que trajo a Inge, todas en la isla querían alisarse y broncear sus cabellos. Si hubiese

querido rubias se habría quedado en Stocolomo. Le gustaban negras. (*Chambacú* 123-24)

Ironically, his brash display of his newfound social mobility has provoked a reaction that he never expected: the development of a cross-cultural fetish for Nordic female features by the black women of Chambacú. Not only does this once-exotic woman (and her bodily features) become a mundane fixture on the island, José Antonio also appears to be discouraged by the loss of the features which he perceived as unique and special to his own culture and ethnicity. He forgets that “el plato ajeno” is something which is received by an entire populace and that there will be a reaction towards this new arrival, either positively or negatively. A number of people who have seen Inge respond to these human features which are rare in their cultural space, just as José Raquel. Without realizing it, he is an agent of transculturation. Inversely, Inge becomes a subject of transculturation, having as well to adjust to new environs and cultural values.

Inge, unlike *Juyungo*'s María de los Ángeles Caecido, is neither a native of Colombia/South America, José Raquel's birthplace, nor has she experienced any contact with a culture, meteorology, or demographic similar to this country. Her reaction to Chambacú and its people is as profound as that of the locals to the sight of her Nordic physical features. For example, Inge falls ill due to the drastic climate change from Northern European winters to Colombian coastal summers. While resting one night, she hears the drums from a nearby party; she becomes both intrigued and overwhelmed:

Que los tambores sepultaran el ruido de la lluvia y los malos olores. Que congelaran el calor en bloques de hielo. Que espantaran sus temores. Quería

asomarse a su barullo, penetrar en su lenguaje. Descifrar cuanto querían decirle. ¿Cómo salir del todo? El grito de la piel tensa la llamaba. (*Chambacú* 76)

Inge seems to be experiencing a sensory overload. This is not to say that she is going through a simple culture shock. She is not certain if she is intrigued by a previously unknown music produced by the drums in the distance or if she is unable to bear what she perceives as simply a mind-numbing noise. Coupled with the fact that she has not yet become acclimated to the Caribbean heat and the constant rain of Chambacú, she is equally as mystified as the locals who have come into contact with this European woman amidst the poverty of their island. Inge even seems to perceive the drums as a consolation for being away from Sweden, a cure for the overwhelming sickness which the climate change has produced. The unique rhythm of these drums is one more affirmation that José Raquel has introduced her to a cultural space with which she has little familiarity, except for the reminder that she is also from a coastal region in Sweden. While she has bouts of nostalgia for her nation of birth, she seemingly has no intention of returning to Sweden, despite undergoing a series of mixed experiences in Chambacú. She has new Colombian family (especially La Cotena, the matriarch of the protagonist family) that has accepted her into their space, which eases her mind somewhat about being far from her cultural origins. Inge's presence on the island has provoked a reciprocal reaction between her and Chambacú's inhabitants that has influenced their social cultural values greatly.

The (Re)Imagined State of Things: Representations of the Political Border as an Imaginary Marker of Shared Culture and Citizenship

In Chapter 1, I briefly referenced the constant presence of the Colombian border as a point of infusion of Afro-Hispanic culture in Coastal Ecuador. I cite in Chapter 2 Booker T Washington and W.E.B Dubois's conversations with Agne Brown as examples of Zapata's representation of endoculturation, or regional cultural differences within the same national border. A national border is often represented as a political or cultural boundary that supposedly determines who is or who is not a citizen of that specific geopolitical space. Benedict Anderson describes the nation as an entity that is "imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lie other nations" (*Nations* 50)⁵³. The above-defined notion of the border, in both works, is constantly challenged by either a characters' literal crossing or the redefinition of that barrier. It is abundantly clear that the issue of the national and regional border plays a significant part in both writers' ideological trajectory in those novels, as well as Zapata's *Chambacú*.

I return *Juyungo*'s constant references to at least two nations with which it shares a border: Colombia and Peru. The former's Pacific coastline is cited by at least five characters as having been either a place of origin, an area to and from which that individual has traveled, or a major source of the Afro-Ecuadorian population in the Esmeraldas province: Ascensión Lastre, Cástulo Chacingre, Clemente Ayoví, Tripa

⁵³ I cite several theorists listed in *Nations and Nationalism*, a collection of essays on the question of nation and citizenship. Therefore, I will use the term *Nations* to represent those theorists.

Dulce, and Antonio Angulo. Again, the conversation between Ascensión, Crispulo Cangá, and Antonio about the origin of the black population in northwest Ecuador represents their consciousness of the importance of the Colombian Pacific Lowlands in such a discourse:

--Mas quiero creé que se soliviantaron (the slaves who escaped to the coast after a shipwreck)—interrumpió Lastre, que no imaginaba cómo se podría soportar esa vida.

--A esto se agrega que hay y ha habido siempre una afluencia de gente de color desde Colombia.

--Así es—aseveró Cangá--, porque allá dizque está el negro que tetea, al menos en el río Patía. (*Juyungo* 269)

Angulo and Cangá reaffirm Colombia's Pacific southeast as a constant space from which much of the coastal Afro-Ecuadorian cultural element derives. They only recognize Colombia as a separate space only in name and, in fact, perceive it as an extension of Esmeraldas's cultural and social plane. The questions of "nation", the "national" and "nationality" are overwhelmingly undermined by the steady cultural exchange between black and Amerindian inhabitants of both so-called countries. Cachingre, the bootlegger who becomes a surrogate father to Ascensión earlier in the novel, conducts a lucrative trade seamlessly between Ecuador and Colombia's political borders. There is also much to be said about the Ecuador's actual historic relationship with Colombia and Venezuela as politically united spaces during the colonial periods (as New Granada and, later, Gran Colombia). These "official" borders never erased the legacy of black slavery, indigenous subjugation, and the resultant social relations which continued seldom interrupted by the

making of the current sovereign states. That is, just as African, Amerindian, and European cross-cultural contacts have constituted both tri-lateral hybridization and established borders which are difficult to define, “official” national and cultural lines are evidenced to have become blurred between Afro-Ecuadorians and Afro-Colombians.

The other major “official” border of concern in *Juyungo* is the one which was the subject of conflict between Ecuador and Peru. While I discussed the work’s representation of the frontline soldiers as being disproportionately black, indigenous, and mestizo, as well as Nelson Díaz’s questioning of why should those soldiers participate in the war, I did not entirely consider the implications of these issues in terms of cultural definition and citizenship. Earlier in the novel, Nelson professes to Lastre that he does not perceive Ecuador as an actual nation. The frequent portrayal of the Ecuadorian government as corrupt and discriminatory against blacks, indigenous, and poor white Hispanics in *Juyungo* attests to Nelson’s attitude. There is a combination of scenes which highlight Nelson’s protests to the war: the local government’s efforts to “redefine” and “refine” Ecuador’s national and cultural values by attempting to attract European immigration, outlaw black marimba music, and the subsequent flight of landowning elites and political powerbrokers who tapped into national funds. Stephen Castles defines the state as “a legal and political organization which controls a certain territory” and the nation as “a cultural community of people who believe that they have a common heritage and a common destiny” (*Nations* 302). He adds that, “the principle of citizenship for all members of society demands the inclusion of new ethnic minorities into the political community; the principle of national belonging demands their exclusion” (*Nations* 305).

In the case of *Juyungo*, the Ecuadorian state is portrayed as a fragmented legal/political space and the border which it controls is of little importance to defining the nation since coastal Afro-Ecuadorians owe much of their cultural heritage to Colombia and are undermined by a state that attempts to acculturate them by enforcing more “European” cultural values. It appears that, at least in *Juyungo*, very few of the soldiers are fighting on behalf of *la patria*. Ortiz represents this war as a battle between another supposedly sovereign state and a geographical space that calls itself officially a nation which is actually severely fragmented culturally, politically, racially, and socioeconomically. The majority of the people who make up the armed forces were only considered citizens under law and hardly ever by practice. *Juyungo* seemingly portrays the black inhabitants of Esmeraldas more as citizens or a cultural cohort of Colombia than the “official” nation Ecuador since their cultural values are perceived by the state as a threat to national order and progress. The irony is that characters such as Angulo, Lastre, and Cangá acknowledge Colombia’s shared cultural, national, and state history with Ecuador.

Zapata, in both *Chambacú* and *Changó*, approaches the crossing of “national” borders both similarly and distinct from Ortiz does so in *Juyungo*. In *Changó*, for example, the presence of a Pan-American pantheon of ancestors serves as a much different example of the traversal of those boundaries. Through the ancestors and combatants’ personal narratives, the reader is able to gain a more intimate sense of transnational and transcultural commonalities among these individuals of the Diaspora, regardless of their distinct lived experiences. For instance, in the section “Las sangres

encontradas”, the Brazilian sculptor “O Aleijadinho” recounts his father’s happiness for the birth of his half-brother:

Andaba yo por los veinticinco años cuando por artes no conocidas nacerá mi hermano Félix Antonio. Desde el mismo día de parido mi padre lo consagra a la vida religiosa y fue entonces cuando supe por qué había sido un hombre taciturno: mi casta negra le impide hacer de mí un presbítero. (*Changó* 291)

Despite being separated from his black mother, raised around his father’s white family, his own European ancestry, and enjoying a somewhat higher degree of freedom compared to enslaved blacks and mulattoes, he is still denied a high church position which would certainly frame him as a Brazilian citizen in a position of power. As a result of a legalized racial caste system, he is never able to attain the status of a full Brazilian citizen despite being born and raised within the country’s borders and having knowledge of Church leadership through his father. As I mentioned earlier, the ancestors and combatants represented in *Changó*, often recall their own similar experiences of disenfranchisement in a temporal and geographic space distinct from one another, demonstrating the commonalities of their life struggles to gain a sense of equality. Yet still, some ancestors recall those stories on behalf of the individual who experienced such a parallel situation. In the section “Los ancestros combatientes”, Ngafúa, the spirit of ancestral memory, recounts Harriet’s rejection of Agne:

El reverendo te sujetó con tanta fuerza que cuando su hermana lo empujó para que entrara, te arrastra con él. Entonces oigo de Nuevo gruñir al Viejo perro y conozco la verdadera voz de mi tía Harriet.

--¡Deja a esa Negra! Las muchachas del servicio se ocuparán de señalarle su lugar. (*Changó* 357)

Ngafúa and Agne, through their conversation, recall a situation that is much similar to that of “O Aleijadinho” with the few differences being the varying racial caste systems from which they and their fathers attempt to escape in a time, language, and geographical location distinct from each other. As William Luis cites, “Agne Brown’s situation recalls that of Benkos Biojo, José Prudencio Padilla, Aleijadinho, and others; thus the novel continues to reinforce the ‘racial whitening’ slavery caused in various parts of the Americas” (Luis xxviii). Despite taking Agne from of the more violent and blatant racism of the Southeastern United States and past the Mason-Dixon Line, his obvious acceptance of her into his family, enrolling her in an integrated school, and the best intentions, there is still a barrier which Harriet refuses to let her brother Robert cross. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, it is fitting that this part of Agne’s life takes place in Kansas, a state north of the Mason-Dixon Line which had just recently erased its official racial borders in public education that took on a similar discriminatory culture to that which is well known in the South. As Aleijadinho fails to be completely accepted by Brazilian society as an equal despite his “whitening”, Agne also falls short of attaining this belonging even when there is no legalized segregation. Zapata simultaneously deals with the international commonalities of racial caste systems and with the “official” internal borders of those two sovereign states (i.e Southern Jim Crow laws, the Mason-Dixon Line separating the North and South, the Brazilian racial caste laws and black codes that stratified skin color by the amount of perceived European ancestry, etc.). Zapata also challenges any claims by either nation that one form of discrimination is more benign than that presented within another sovereign state’s national borders; he presents both

Aleijadinho and Agne's situations as examples of a "one-drop rule", or the unattainability of "whiteness" regardless of the degree of European ancestry that an individual can proclaim, which is common throughout the Americas no matter what "official" discrimination system was used.

In *Chambacú*, the question of sovereignty takes on a more unilateral flavor. In this work, the Colombian government openly allows United States intervention in order for the latter to recruit mostly black men residing in the Chambacú district of Cartagena, a section that is walled off from the rest of the city, for the Korean War. The citizens of Chambacú are well aware of both the United States' internal and external Cold War politics, as Crispulo, a gamecock fighter and the brother of the protagonist Máximo, attests:

Para mí no hay sino Chambacú. Ni siquiera Cartagena. Con lo mal que nos miran, ¿por qué ha de ir uno a pelear por ellos? Menos servir de burro de carga a los gringos. Si ellos quieren matar chinos y coreanos, será porque algo ganarán. Money. Es lo único que les interesa. Esos místeres tampoco saben lo que es democracia. Yo sé que allá cuelgan negros. (*Chambacú* 37)

Here, Crispulo recognizes that, despite nominally being a Colombian, his own sovereign state is willing to compromise his protection from being used as a body for another nation's political and economic agenda. His national border, then, is reduced to a futile imaginary line that is erased by the United States' hegemonic Cold War discourse and its "Good Neighbor" policies which provide legal justification for imposing its political and socioeconomic ideologies on Latin American countries. Crispulo is also cognizant of another profound United States institution: legalized racial segregation, which literally

establishes a political and social border between whites and black. He understands that the inhabitants of Chambacú are being disenfranchised by two sovereign states, one of which he is not even an “officially” recognized citizen and does not recognize a large portion of its own population as such due to their ethnicity. Crispulo also understands that loaded terms such as “Liberty” and “Democracy” are too often cultural and national myths constructed by the United States which are utilized to impose their political and social ideologies beyond their “official” national borders in the name of interests; he sees this external intervention as a strategy to acculturate the rest of the world. Those interests, along with confronting a drastically different and exponentially more oppressive culture of discrimination, are enough for Crispulo to perceive a threat for Chambacuers within and outside of their national borders as well as maintain a consciousness of the social challenges inherent of the entire African Diaspora, regardless of nationality. The next section deals with the potential influences of Mexican literature on the literary techniques employed by Ortiz and Zapata in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú*; I am considering, here, the possible transculturation of their literary production.

Literal Literary Transculturation: Possible Flashes of Mexican Narrative in *Changó*, *Juyungo* and *Chambacú*

As I have mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Afro-Hispanic and Amerindian writers began to represent themselves in national discourses on race, citizenship, and national belonging. Nevertheless, this meant that they had to write and

speak in western languages (for Amerindian writers whose first language was not Spanish) and letters in order to carry out those counterpoints to broader audiences. This also meant that since these writers were reading and writing in Spanish (possibly English, French, and Portuguese for that matter), had access to literary translations, or traveling within and outside of their sovereign states, they could also look to influences beyond their cultural spaces in terms of narrative strategy.

During my earlier research for this thesis, I will admit that I underestimated one trait that is either subtly or profusely inserted in *Changó*, *Juyungo*, and possibly *Chambacú*: the presence of revolutionary Mexico in those works. As a consequence, I found myself re-defining what I understood as literary transculturation. In this section, I am not only referring to a representation of cross-cultural contact between characters or during a particular character's travel to or arrival at an unfamiliar geographic, cultural, or political space. I am also referring here to literary innovations not specific to the cultural space of negritude or *negrismo*, which may have nevertheless influenced Ortiz's and Zapata's own narrative strategies.

To varying degrees, there are references to either historical figures that have participated directly in the early bids for Mexican independence or in the Mexican Revolution or individuals who played major roles in nation-building during the time of one of those events. The mythos and the narrative about these significant moments in Mexican history often cited the intentions of many participants in these political battles as attempts to liberate the downtrodden from institutional and social oppression. Quite

often, these social underdogs were also agents in these struggles for improved franchise and sense of citizenship; coincidentally, these underdogs were of indigenous, African, and European ancestry, as well as members of the rural working class. Further research of two essays on *Los de abajo* from Manuel Zapata Olivella led me to more evidence of the relationship that the Mexican Revolution and the representation of that event appears to have in at least two of his novels. Certainly, in both artists' works, there seems to be a strong link between Mexico and their literary portrayals of black resistance and citizenship struggles, as well as literary innovations.

In *Juyungo*, although there are very few visible references to the Mexican Revolution, there is one to which I returned:

El alumnado era de tan variado tamaño como los canutos de una marimba, igual. Desde chirringos hasta maltones abobados a quienes por un lado les entraba y por el otro les salía. Usaban texto de lectura ya pasados: el mexicano Torres Quintero o el Lector Ecuatoriano, y atendían las clases desordenadas de Afrodita, sentados a machote en el mismo suelo brillante por el sobajeo de los traseros. (*Juyungo* 119)

Before studying Zapata's archives, I mostly overlooked the reference to Torres Quintero since, primarily, my interest was to discuss Afrodita's impact on Lastre in terms how she is one of the first individuals to portray a positive social image of black women, and Afro-Ecuadorian people in general. Zapata's analysis of Mariano Azuela's novel *Los de abajo* indirectly provoked a re-reading of this excerpt. It appears that Torres Quintero was a rural educator during the time of the Mexican Revolution. This is particularly important in terms of Adalberto Ortiz's representation of the inequalities of not only

between white landowning/political elites and blacks but those between urban and rural inhabitants in most Latin American countries as a result of nation-building trends that occurred in the late 19th and early 20th century. Such vast projects of centralization had a drastically negative effect on rural infrastructure and economy. While it seems that the narrator downplay the impact that Mexican academic figure has in Afrodita and Lastre's time, the importance of this allusion at this particular point in the novel, in which the latter appears to first gain a social consciousness and a stronger subversive characteristic, cannot be understated. As a rural, black social underdog, Lastre realizes as triply subjugated individual that he must be triply subversive.

While this is the clearest, possibly only, allusion to a historical figure that lived through the Mexican Revolution, the Torres Quintero reference is certainly not the only point of debate about the presence of that event in *Juyungo*. While I have no direct evidence of this, I feel that it is appropriate to discuss a literary archetype that is prominent in both *Juyungo* and *Los de abajo*: the intellectual and the shattered soldier. While the two main intellectual and soldier/warrior characters in the two works, Nelson Díaz, Ascensión Lastre, Luis Cervantes, and Demetrio Macías, differ in their individual projects, both pairs have a significant and intimate relationship with one another. Each of these characters' actions is either directly or indirectly impacted by an actual historical revolutionary event (the Mexican Revolution and the lesser known Conchista Rebellion in coastal Ecuador). In the case of Macías, his project begins as one in which he believes that he will be part of radical social change in favor of the nation's destitute, which is comprised of mostly rural and overwhelmingly indigenous populations, and ends with

him not knowing why his fighting anymore. He goes into a struggle in which he knows little of the political ramifications or actual positive impact that it will have on the disenfranchised of Mexico. Luis Cervantes, a doctor who later helps Macías's injured comrades, realizes early the chaos of the country's political status and ends up exploiting an opportunity to flee the country. Here, the intellectual character profits from the turmoil while the soldier figure becomes a man lost. Macías, upon hearing news of the capture of Emiliano Zapata, returns home to a wife who has aged considerably and a son who does not recognize him. Demetrio determines that he would rather die in a war with no established goal than return to a family that he neither recognizes nor knows him.

Similarly, the intellectual is the thriving individual while the warrior is shattered. His death is the result of a poorly defined/unilateral national project in which he still attempts to fight for public recognition in *Juyungo*. Díaz, however, seeks neither to profit from nor flee from the national crises that politicians have instigated. He is also not of an elite family. His warrior friend Lastre is also far more socially conscious and politically active than Demetrio. Nelson's link with Ascensión begins with the participation on the latter's uncle Commander Lastre in the Conchista Revolution, a three-year uprising which involved a direct protégé of liberal leader Eloy Alfaro (Concha) and the conservative central government in Quito. This internal fight was a major struggle that involved a mostly black cohort concerning the discrimination and lack of resources endemic in the coastal region as a result of inaction, apathy, and the of the federal government, as well as the latter's growing intervention in black cultural activity on the coast. Nelson, as well as Ascensión, is well aware of the inherent problems of Ecuador's

political environment and as a result neither recognizes that geographical space as an actual nation. As this is the case, they protest and resist a much more well-defined political and social opposition. As Macías and Cervantes, however, they are both forced to face the repercussions of a “national” project that is of little benefit to the communities they represent. In fact, this “imagined community” detrimental to both of them. In an attempt to gentrify blacks, the politician Valdez initiates a project to attract European immigrants and local white elites to Esmeraldas, as well as quell any type of cultural activity that has noticeable “African” characteristics (music, dance, etc.). One part of this project is to set ablaze the houses of the Peperán island inhabitant, mostly of black ethnicity. This fire kills Lastre’s newborn son and as a result drives his wife María to insanity. As Demetrio, Ascensión becomes a man lost. Although both he and Nelson are forced by the central government to participate in the border war against Perú, the former takes it as an opportunity to validate his bloodline’s heroic warrior tradition, not as an act of patriotism. Just as Macías, Lastre dies in a war after a time of his life in which his future is shattered by a national entity. Unlike Demetrio, he still has a living representative for his struggles for black/indigenous/destitute inclusion into the national discourse: Nelson Díaz. *Juyungo*’s ending reveals that, upon his release as a prisoner of war, Nelson continues his activism, combating the corruption and exploitation endemic in Ecuador of which individuals such as Valdez (and, to an extent, Cervantes) are culpable. As Azuela portrays the Mexican Revolution as an event lacking in a defined political goal, Ortiz portrays Lastre and Díaz’s roles as activists who have a particular ideology and an actual social opposition. As I mentioned, there appeared to be enough of a

possible connection between the representation of events or historical figures of the Mexican Revolution (the mention of Torres Quintero) and the portrayal of the Conchista uprising in *Juyungo* to consider a comparison of the Ortiz and Azuela's works. The major commonality between *Juyungo* and *Los de abajo*, however, seems to be the presence of similar intellectual/soldier paradigms in the two novels. The intellectual characters in question (Díaz and Cervantes) represent the surviving national consciousness of their respective countries' sociopolitical status whereas Lastre and Macías, who fit the "warrior/soldier" archetype, enforce a national or cultural ideal (improvement of social conditions, black pride, affirmation of equal citizenship, etc.) at the cost of their lives. As I mentioned previously, after studying two of Manuel Zapata Olivella's essays on *Los de abajo*, there is more of a reason to suspect the impact of his reading of historical and literary representations of subversive activity in Mexico has in at least two of his works, *Changó* and *Chambacú*.

In *Changó*, as I cited earlier, Zapata directly inserts José María Morelos's uprising against the Spanish crown and links him to the attempted liberation of black slaves and indigenous peons, one of Mexico's earliest instances of subversive activity on the behalf of the subjugated. However, I would like to further discuss the intellectual/soldier paradigm in relation to two characters in *Chambacú*: Máximo, the self-educated and socially educated intellectual activist, and his brother José Raquel, who volunteers for the Korean War and later profits off of it. As is the case in *Juyungo*, both parties of this intellectual/soldier relationship become very keen to local politics that affect their communities; unlike Lastre and Díaz, they are aware of an international force that factors

into the exploitation of their community: the United States. Just as Luis Cervantes flees to the United States for personal gain, José Raquel cooperates with the North American superpower to avoid punishment for his involvement in trafficking contraband, and in becoming an agent in the US international project (the Cold War), he becomes a beneficiary of armed combat (he takes the identification information of dead soldiers to reap the monetary compensation that rightfully belongs to the families of those fallen fighters). Meanwhile, as a result of his continued resistance against recruitment for the United States' war, Máximo is vilified as a communist and incarcerated for his subversive actions. As the most well-read and most politically active individual in Chambacú, he also struggles to procure sufficient backing by his community to carry out a successful protest since the majority of population is either uneducated, fears arrest, or both. It is not until José Raquel becomes a police sergeant, sells his community out, and shoots Máximo dead upon opening fire against him in order to quell a protest does the populace of Chambacú realize that the Colombian and United States government have for too long exploited their community. In this work, then, Zapata creates a shattered intellectual (Máximo) and a triumphant-exploitive soldier/henchman (José Raquel). Again, it is difficult for me to avoid the very prominent presence of the intellectual/soldier paradigm in both *Chambacú* and *Los de abajo*, especially after seeing Zapata's research on the latter.

Returning to *Changó*, there is at least one major literary device which resembles that of another Mexican writer's work: Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*. Given the similar narrative strategies of the two novels, as well as the constant presence of the dead, both

Zapata and Rulfo seem to represent their cultural communities (Africana and Mexico, respectively) as long-suffering social underdogs. What interests me is Rulfo's use of this strategy to represent his cultural space as one suspended in hopeless tragedy whereas Zapata uses such a literary innovation to represent the extended community (the African Diaspora) in *Changó* as one in an ongoing struggle. As I mentioned earlier, it is not uncommon for writers who attempt to self-represent their communities in literature to experiment with styles outside of their cultural spaces (hence, the term "literary transculturation"). The similarities between *Changó* and *Pedro Páramo*'s literary strategies are difficult to ignore.

In both works, the constant presence of multiple first-person narrators provides a mood of self-reflection for each "character" who was involved in the grand scheme of the novels. As cited, there are major differences in how this literary strategy is used in the two. In *Pedro Páramo*, all of these characters are ghosts who are stuck in their own purgatory/hell as a result of their sins of omission in life. I offer the example of the priest Padre Rentería:

Todo esto que sucede es por mi culpa—se dijo—. El temor de ofender a quienes me sostienen. Porque ésta es la verdad; ellos me dan mi mantenimiento. De los pobres no consigo nada; las oraciones no llenan el estómago. Así ha sido hasta ahora. Y éstas son las consecuencias. Mi culpa. (*Páramo* 128)

Padre Rentería's sin centers on his spiritual assistance to the rich and powerful while his most faithful patrons could not financially afford his brand of salvation. The only time he "redeems" this sin is out of personal revenge after Pedro Páramo's son, Miguel, allegedly

rapes his niece; despite the monetary offers from Pedro, Rentería refuses to save Miguel's soul after his death. Rentería knows there is nothing that he or anyone else can do to redeem his actions (or inactions) during his life; there is literally nobody left alive in Comala. All of the other narrative voices which speak about or for other characters can only offer a subjective account of a dead individual's actions on Earth. Neither can these lost souls act as an extension of hope for the living since there are no future generations in Comala. This is where Zapata's use of multiple first person narrative voices distinguishes itself from that of Rulfo. *Changó's* narrators are living, dead, and divine individuals who are intimately involved in the struggles for the liberation and full recognition of the citizen of the American subaltern (slaves, peons, blacks, Amerindians, the destitute, etc). These "characters", comprised of both historical and fictional figures, also travel through a time-space continuum in which they literally relive their actions, as well as reflect on them. Some of these characters, known as the "ancestors" or "shadows", although they supposedly have already died, can even speak directly to their living combatants. For example, Ngafúa, the ancestor of memory, converses with Agne Brown about her chronic questioning of her identity while Reverend Robert was raising her:

Te habrías quedado paralizada en la entrada si tu padrastro no te hubiese acostumbrado a sujetarte de su mano para obligarte suavemente a avanzar hasta el rincón de su mesa. Allí permaneces quieta con tus bracitos de trapo. Aunque no te miraran, pues ya se ha dado por admitida tu presencia, cada día te hacen sentir su rechazo. (*Changó* 378-79)

Here, Ngafúa recalls the subtle racism that Reverend Robert's sister Harriet and her friends demonstrated towards her, even in a state where segregation was nominally deemed illegal. In this case, however, Agne is still living and can act to prevent such discrimination from occurring to a member of the next generation. Ngafúa reflects on the pasts of individuals and a collective which still fights for equal status in the Americas, both living and dead. He is also there to present the living combatant with the stories of ancestors and past combatants who shared similar experiences, thus the characters in *Changó*, unlike those of *Pedro Páramo*, still have hope that their problems on Earth can be resolved. Many of the ancestors and ancestral shadows are present to self-reflect primarily so that the next generation of combatants can learn from their successes, failures, and most importantly, their contributions while they were alive. Even the ancestral voices that do not speak directly to a living combatant comment on their historical representations to actively redeem their images:

Nuestra lucha liberadora ha sido vilipendiada con el falso estigma de la Guerra de razas. Si la Loba Blanca oprimió, asesina, expoliará, su crueldad siempre aromada con incienso, se estima civilizadora. Cuando el esclavo resistió, revienta las cadenas y venza al amo, su acción es homicida, racista, bárbara. (*Changó* 198)

Zapata's Henri Christophe attempts to rewrite an "official history" that still has an enduring legacy today. However, through his personal testimony on the Haitian Revolution, there is still the prospect of changing the minds of the living populations of not only the African Diaspora but of the Americas as a whole. Unlike the characters in *Pedro Páramo*, this event does not set up an entire population for social stagnation and

political instability; it was a moment of overwhelming optimism for people who have been trying to regain a full sense of citizenship in a place where they were robbed of their humanity. The Haitian Revolution's impact is not limited to a national political space, either. Contrary to Comala's inhabitants, there is a living generation to defend the image of the Haitian revolutionaries.

While further research may be necessary to solidify my argument, I still contend there are similarities in both the content and literary innovations of Zapata, Ortiz, Azuela, and Rulfo. The varying allusions to both historical figures that lived and literary works published during or around the time of the Mexican Revolution make those questions of literary influence difficult to ignore. As I mentioned, there seems to be somewhat more evidence that Zapata may have looked to literary representations of the Mexican Revolution as a result of several research papers that he wrote on *Los de abajo* and other Mexican novels in the 1960s and 1970s. Ángel Rama once cited the transculturation of European literary techniques by Latin American avant-garde writers in the early 20th century. Therefore, it is my argument that the occurrence of such cross cultural influence in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú* is not out of the realm of possibility. I have questions about how Azuela and Rulfo's works have been received compared those that I have mentioned of Ortiz and Zapata. These writers commonly represented their own local communities through fiction (Mexican, Ecuadorian, Colombian, Afro-American, etc.). Yet, *Los de abajo* and *Pedro Páramo* are regulars in the Hispanic canon, whereas works such as *Juyungo* and *Changó, el gran putas* are just now entering that elite literary citizenship, despite their similar discourses on the nation and the social underdog. They

are commonly literary works of the Americas, yet the last two novels mentioned would be labeled as less “universal” or “global” because of their “Afro-American” flavor and considered less representative of broader Pan-American culture.

Conclusion

As mentioned, this chapter was an opportunity to consider and elaborate on ideas that I may have briefly cited earlier in the thesis. While each section of this chapter engages seemingly distinct issues that are represented in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú* (I found it appropriate to add this last novel to the discussion since it is a Zapata work that is structurally and thematically similar to *Juyungo*), they commonly expand upon the thesis’s principal questions of cross-cultural exchange, citizenship, and national/cultural myth. The first section engaged what I called “reciprocated otherness”, or the reaction of two participants in an interracial relationship to one another as well as their respective communities. In section two, I considered the representation of the political border as a questionable indicator of national culture and unity in all three novels. Section three provides questions about the stylistic and thematic influence of twentieth-century Mexican literature on *Juyungó*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú*. I mentioned that, upon considering this possible international literary relationship, my understanding of “literary transculturation” shifted to include the cross-cultural influences in the narrative discourse. There is another issue that I would like to consider, if the opportunity arises: did Adalberto Ortiz and Manuel Zapata Olivella, keeping in mind the geographical proximity of their two countries and the similar thematic of these three novels (regardless

of the fact that Juyungo was published 24 years before Chambacú and 40 years prior to Changó's publication), ever have any contact with each other?

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

Conclusion

Self-representation in literary production by indigenous and Afro-Hispanic writers seems to have surged in the mid-to-late 20th century, and provided revisionist portrayals of the black and Amerindian. Their voices offered a counterpoint to earlier stereotypes of these two groups in Latin American historical, political, social, and literary discourse. Such projects have been realized through various literary genres (prose, poetry, essay, etc.) in both oral and written modes of conveyance, and through several schools of investigation (literature, folklore, anthropology, history, sociology, etc.). Often, those projects have been the result of a combination of the above categories. The representation of cross-cultural contact/evolution, nation-building and the question of citizenship in the Americas seems to be a major preoccupation in the Adalberto Ortiz's *Juyungo* and Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas* and *Chambacú, corral de negros*.

Chapter two engaged the human development of *Juyungo*'s protagonist Ascensión Lastre, the portrayal of the mixed-race Afro-Ecuadorian intellectual as fragmented both

in identity and in ideology, and the presence of several secondary characters as major representatives of Afro-Ecuadorian cultural hybridization. In the first section, I proposed that Ascensión goes through a transcultural and ideological evolution through his stay with the Cayapa Indians, his contacts with two mixed-race contemporaries with whom he forges a close friendship (the intellectual-nihilist Antonio Angulo and intellectual-activist Nelson Díaz), his relationships with three women of distinct ethnic heritage (indigenous, African, and European), and a symbolic death after fighting in the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border war, where goes through indigenous death rites that he had observed as a child.

Section two turns the attention to Nelson Díaz and Antonio Angulo. I proposed that, as mixed-race intellectuals, they explore the fragmentation of their “nation” through self-observation. For example, while Nelson attempts to carry out the egalitarian project of seeking improved human rights for all marginalized Ecuadorians, he is at the same time self-conscious of his light skin and his desire to be physically “blacker”. Antonio explores such psychological and social fragmentation through his vast knowledge of Pan-Africana and the maltreatment of mulattos and blacks internationally, coming to the conclusion that the absolute oblivion of his race is the only means of gaining equality. They also represent two literary archetypes of the intellectual in *Juyungo*. Whereas Díaz plays a more activist role in attempting to improve the social conditions of black, indigenous, and other marginalized Ecuadorians, Antonio’s nihilist streak trumps his academic prowess in Pan-African culture studies.

I discussed the roles of multiple secondary characters as significant and symbolic testaments to the hybridized coastal Ecuadorian culture which often extend the representation of that cultural space to Colombia's pacific lowlands. Cástulo Cachingre and Don Clemente Ayoví are talented oral storytellers who have special places in Ascensión Lastre's development since the protagonist seemingly learns valuable lessons from their anecdotes that he often uses in dire situations (his encounter with a puma in the woods shortly after Clemente recounts the story of a local jungle monster in that area, for example). I proposed that this is Ortiz's attempt at emphasizing the significance of orality in popular and Afro-Ecuadorian cultures, as well as a tribute to the Spanish American chronicle. I argued that Tripa Dulce, an Afro-Colombian contrabandist and criminal turned Cayapa "witchdoctor", portrays simultaneously shared (and perhaps mutually feared) Afro-Indigenous cosmovisions and the pitfalls of religious reverence as a potential means of exploiting all marginalized peoples. He often uses his powerful position as a chief religious official to assert his power over the Cayapa population, much like several Catholic priests who appear later in *Juyungo*. Upon discussing Crispulo Cangá's role in the novel, I considered the question of confrontational acculturation in relation to the erasure of the African cultural element from national public space. Cangá is a talented marimba musician and a close friend of Ascensión who is forced by the local government to discontinue any performance of the musical genre because of its "black" rhythms. This occurs as a result of a national project of "progress" and "modernity" or an attempt to "whiten", even "Europeanize", coastal Ecuador and erase marginal elements to "better the race".

While *Juyungo* deals with transculturation, nation-building, and citizenship at a mostly national level (with some references to Colombia and South Africa), *Changó* seems to approach those questions through a blatantly Pan-American trajectory. I propose that one element that makes such an ambitious project possible is the presence of the living, dead, and divine in chapter two. For instance, in the first section, I discuss Zapata's literary creation Changó as a cultural survival that transcends religion, language, race, and nationality. This literary representation of Changó often seems more capable of such survival than the countless other religious, historical, and literary manifestations of the deity because Zapata portrays him also as an ideal of liberation and thus he is compatible with all world cultures. Specifically, I consider Changó's manifestation as a deity that appears to Zapata's fictional José María Morelos as the Aztec god Tláloc. Here, I proposed that Zapata reiterates the shared cosmovisions of Africans and Amerindians. It also appears to me that this cosmic vision is reinforced by Odumare (the Yoruba god responsible for creation) and his creation of the Mesoamerican Olmecs. Essentially, Zapata represents this indigenous group as the first Afro-Americans. The fictionalized Nat Turner's encounter with Changó is the point of departure in the second part of this section. Here, Changó demonstrates that he is capable of manifesting himself in a cultural tradition where he is presumed nonexistent: North American Evangelical Christianity. My argument here is that Zapata represents the use of the Bible as a tool to coerce submission as ironic since it is this "Western" religious book, particularly the Old Testament, which aligns with this literary Changó's motives to liberate blacks from slavery through all-out rebellion; an item intended to acculturate at acculturating the

slaves becomes a transcultural tool of dissent. Zapata's Changó also highlights that he has very human qualities as a result of his failed attempt to choose Simón Bolívar as the liberator of New World blacks, despite the latter's culturally mulatto upbringing (Hipólita, a black woman, acts as a surrogate mother to him). I also argue that, through Changó's acceptance of a creole combatant, he also becomes culturally mulatto, thus emphasizing his identity as not African, but Afro-American.

Section two considers the question of citizenship and recognition of Afro-American contributions to their overall national cultures through education, technical innovation, and military service. I reiterate that Zapata frames these issues as primarily Pan-American and indirectly African. Agne Brown's experiences as a black girl adopted by a white protestant surrogate father during the height of racial tensions in the mid-twentieth century United States represents the question of making the "ideal" American and indicating who belongs in such a category. Despite Reverend Brown raising Agne as a Protestant and enrolling her into integrated schools, she is still framed as a social and racial outsider by a majority of whites, attesting to the unattainability of "whiteness" even when the individual seems to be culturally "whitened" (I do not argue, however, that Robert's intention is to consciously "whiten" Agne). I proposed that Zapata, through constant reiteration of the commonalities of New World slavery and discrimination, represents Agne's situation as a problem inherent throughout the Americas, with the fictionalized Aleijadinho as a Latin American example. Agne also has to confront racism in academia as her professor, Dr. Harrington, vehemently denies and discredits African and Afro-American cultural innovation and intellectual production in the New World.

Through a cosmic visit from Zapata's version of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois, two black intellectuals who are symbols of the ideological plurality within the African American community, Agne reaffirms her suspicions that much of the history that she was taught about New World blacks was revised in order to omit examples of Afro-American cultural and innovative contributions to the overall national culture. The recollections of their debates on how Afro-Americans should obtain a greater sense of citizenship in the United States, I argued, represent Zapata's concept of endoculturation, or regional cultural differences that occur within the same national border. I then turned my attention to the representation of the black soldier as an exploited national contributor who is at the same time denied recognition of full citizenship or is vilified for questioning such inequality, despite having western surnames, attempting to adhere to a national ideology/myth, and the intentions of proving that he is also an citizen of his respective sovereign state. The fictionalized José Prudencio Padilla and the fictional Joseph Stephens, Sr. serve as examples for such contradiction in *Changó*. I also proposed that, as Ascensión Lastre seeks to honor his uncle's surname, Joseph Stephens Jr. makes an attempt to redeem his father's name to affirm his right to be considered a full American citizen. Joe, however, protests the Vietnam War in order to end the culture of exploitation in the United States, only to have his name erased from existence after being thrown in prison. He, as Padilla after his questioning of the definition of "liberty", has his voice silenced for daring to challenge a national myth.

The third section analyzes Zapata's aesthetic of romanticizing black-indigenous alliance throughout *Changó*. There seems to be a preoccupation with the relationship

between New World blacks and Amerindians at the very beginning of the novel, starting with the birth of the mythical first Afro-American child, who arrives in the Caribbean as an orphan to Africa and is nurtured by Arawak women. The Arawak will raise this child, who was born to an African mother during a turbulent voyage to the New World on a slave ship, to prepare him for life in the Americas. Zapata continues this trend throughout the novel, including a scene that I cited earlier in which Morelos encounters what could either be Changó or Tláloc. In the case of *Changó's* portrayal of the Haitian Revolution, the literary Boukman does not allow the reader to forget the presence of the Arawak on the island of Hispañola, despite their physical absence by the time African slaves have fully replaced their labor, and even vows vengeance for their extermination. Zapata also highlights indigenous cultural elements that are incorporated into Haitian *orisha/lwa* invocation, especially tobacco, which was previously absent from Yoruba religious tradition. *Changó* also portrays the fragmentation of this cosmic bond between New World blacks and Amerindians, symbolically locating this schism in the early stages of Jim Crow racism in the United States. Zapata portrays the Black Indian scouts who elected to leave the Seminole tribes in Mexico for a chance at United States citizenship as pawns in a divide-and-conquer strategy that involved using the scouts in indigenous extermination projects and, afterwards, subjecting the soldiers to the same racial discrimination that other Afro-Americans also suffered after the abolition of slavery.

Chapter four explored issues in the aforementioned novels and Zapata's *Chambacú, corral de negros* which I either briefly mentioned or considered after further investigation (especially after researching Zapata's archives). For example, in the first

section, I expanded on an idea that I introduced in chapter two dealing with the reciprocated “otherness” demonstrated in the interracial relationships represented in *Juyungo* and *Chambacú*. While I discussed in the first chapter Lastre’s psychological conflicts which resulted from his sexual relationship and eventual marriage to María, a white woman, I explored her own reaction to the encounter with Ascensión and other Esmeraldan blacks. I compared her cross-cultural contacts with those that *Chambacú*’s Inge experiences upon arriving to Colombia by way of Sweden. I proposed that, in both cases, Ortiz and Zapata represent transculturation as a multilateral process that affects not only blacks and Amerindians, but equally does so for Europeans and Euro-Americans. I argue that María and Inge, although they observe what they perceive as “otherness”, they are also subject to being framed as “others”.

In the section “The (Re)Imagined State of Things”, I discuss the question of the national political border as a signifier for “national” culture and citizenship. This issue appears to me an especially chronic theme in *Juyungo*, as a significant number of characters, primary and secondary, point to the Colombian Pacific lowlands as an extended cultural space, especially for Afro-Ecuadorian residents of Esmeraldas. These characters seem to undermine the notions of “national” culture that Ecuadorian politicians and intellectuals attempt to impose on them in the novel. As for the “official” national border, the question of national identity becomes apparent with the forced participation of Lastre, Díaz, Angulo, and other blacks and Amerindians in the Ecuadorian Peruvian border wars. Nelson seems to question if Ecuador is more like a racially and socially fragmented geographic space with a political border than an actual

nation with shared cultural values. I then considered Zapata's "border-crossing" aesthetic in *Changó* and *Chambacú*. In *Changó*, Zapata experiments with border transcendence through the constant interactions between "ancestors" hailing from nations throughout the Americas and the living combatants which are reminded of past events that had similar implications to what they currently confront. Through these ancestors and combatants' "personal" stories, Zapata attempts to represent the commonalities of an entire diaspora, regardless of nationality. Thus, not only is the national border undermined, but the myths such as "the land of the free" and "racial democracy" that are often part of North and Latin American discourse. He does not avoid the questioning of "official" national borders, however, as this is especially the case in the part of the novel which is set in the mid-twentieth century United States. He portrays Jim Crow racial policies as having a major North American cultural presence well past the Mason-Dixon Line (the border that traditionally divided the Northern and Southern United States) despite the lack of an official line that segregates blacks from whites. *Chambacú* approaches the question of citizenship through its representation of the Colombian government as a nation that openly permits the United States to encroach its borders by allowing that country to recruit mostly black men for their battalions in the Korean War; as a consequence, it seems that Zapata problematizes the notion of citizenship for Chambacueros, who are simultaneously exploited by two sovereign states while having few rights within their own. The characters in this novel are also well aware of the Jim Crow laws, United States institution in which official internal borders are imposed to divide citizens racially. For the residents of Chambacú, the prospect of those cultural practices being imposed on

them with little or no protection within their own national borders is very real, as well as an indictment on their so-called homeland.

As mentioned earlier, I have often reevaluated my ideas about what “literary transculturation” could mean. In the case of the third section of this chapter, the notion of “literary transculturation” dealt more with the possible literary influences from literature of another nation on the writer. Upon studying Zapata’s manuscripts, I noticed his preoccupation with literature representing the Mexican Revolution, namely *Los de abajo* and *Pedro Páramo*. I then proposed the question of how much influence such literature may have had in Zapata’s works stylistically and thematically since a continuing theme in the majority of his narratives were centered on the downtrodden and often contained what I will call an intellectual/soldier paradigm. I also applied this question to Ortiz’s *Juyungo*, which has similar stylistic and thematic features to *Los de abajo*, as well as a reference to an educational figure who worked in rural areas during the events of the Mexican Revolution. The main distinction that I highlighted from the aforementioned Mexican works was that *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú* had overwhelmingly more optimism about the prospects of the downtrodden in the Americas. For example, while Luis Cervantes flees Mexico to become a medical doctor, Nelson Díaz, despite being forced to serve in a border war for an obviously fragmented nation in Ecuador, continues his activism in the hope that his homeland can be an actual “nation”; Lastre, unlike the “shattered soldier” Demetrio Macías, does not die in vain since he has a living intellectual representative for his ideals and also had well-defined ones at that. While *Changó* seems to be stylistically similar to *Pedro Páramo* in terms of narrative style

(multiple first-person voices), the former includes the voices of both the dead and the living, exuding far more hope for all of the “characters” involved in the struggles for liberation and redemption; there is no such optimism to be had in *Pedro Páramo*, since the entire town is dead and stuck in what appears to be hell or purgatory. As mentioned, further study is necessary for solid evidence that this cross-cultural literary relationship with Mexico actually exists in the works of Zapata and Ortiz.

I argue that *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and *Chambacú* successfully represent the collaborations, conflicts, suffering, struggles, and cultural hybridization common in the Americas with unique forms of literary innovation. While *Juyungo* and *Chambacú* seemingly read more like social realist novels, Ortiz employs rhythmic poetry in the introductions of each chapter and within a number of them, confirming his reputation as an auto-representative *negrista* writer. *Juyungo* also appears to use elements of the bildungsroman to portray the cross-cultural and social evolution of its protagonist Ascensión Lastre as an allegory to the long and complicated relationships between Afro-Ecuadorians, Amerindians, and white Hispanic Ecuadorians. *Chambacú*'s narrative style, seemingly as a precursor to *Changó*, constantly changes the narrative focus to each of the major characters, (La Cotena, her children Máximo the activist, José Raquel the assimilationist, Cotilde the female servant, Medialuna the boxer, and Crispulo the cockfighter, and Inge the Swedish in-law) to create an environment of psychological displacement as a result of transculturation (José Raquel's involvement in the Korean War and the resultant trauma, Inge's adjustment to the Caribbean heat and *Chambacú*'s cultural values and endemic poverty) or the hopelessness of being a *Chambacú* resident

(constant US intervention, the threat of gentrification, etc.). For me, the inclusion and interaction of living, dead, and divine individuals who represent the Anglophone, Lusophone, Hispanophone, and Francophone regions of the Americas is one of the high marks of *Changó, el gran putas*. As I have already argued, in order for such a massive project to function, Zapata employs orality, writing, history, narrative fiction, prose, poetry, and multiple first, second, and third person narrative voices.

This is to say, if these works lacked what I perceive as artistic value, I would have never considered them appropriate for this particular thesis, a literary analysis. I can say with confidence that Adalberto Ortiz's *Juyungo* and Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas* and *Chambacú, corral de negros* need no canonization for me to appreciate them as literary works, as too often some readers seek such gratification to pique their curiosity. If anyone is to learn a lesson from how the "ideal citizen" is created through national myth, that individual should keep in mind that, just as a region/nation/continent's culture is comprised of an intermingling of social values, ethnicities, and worldviews, literature transcends the boundaries of a singular critical value and canonization as a result of the readers with those ever-changing worldviews, ethnicities, and nationalities. During my research, I have constantly reevaluated and redefined what I understand as literary transculturation to include not only the characters and techniques to represent that phenomenon in a literary work, but also the writers' and readers' diverse and ever-changing notions of what "good" or enjoyable literature is. Having the privilege of reading the works of these two Afro-Hispanic authors, I reiterate, has altered or at least forced me to reevaluate my own worldview and definition of American literature.

Future Research Possibilities

As for other points of interests in Zapata's archives, I am particularly interested in his travels to the Southeastern United States during the presence of Jim Crow segregation and his exchanges of correspondence with Langston Hughes. These two events, I argue, may have been influential in his shift from briefly mentioning the races of his characters in *Tierra mojada* and *En Chimá nace un santo* to his ideological trajectory in *Chambacú* and *Changó*. In his column "Colombiano en la tierra del Ku Klux Klan" (also documented in his travelogue *He visto la noche*), he documents a warning in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution newspaper that a Klan rally was going to occur at a specific time and place, similar to the announcement of a cultural festivity. Zapata also recalls his friends in New York City discouraging him from going to the South; he would end up experiencing the Southern brand of racism upon entering Washington, D.C, traditionally considered a southern city until very recently. There is also another issue that preoccupies him: the North American definition of "black". This occurs when he sees a white soldier who approaches a French-Speaking mixed-race woman of African descent; he claims that the soldier did not consider her "black" because she did not speak English and that "real" black women are incapable of knowing another language. This is one of the first accounts of an Afro-Latino visiting or living in the pre-Civil Rights Southeastern United States that I have ever encountered; I am interested in the possibility of hearing more stories from Afro-Latin Americans who have lived or travelled to the region during legalized racial segregation. However, I realize with an aging generation from that era that this could be a majorly difficult task. As for his contacts with Langston Hughes, I

was lucky enough to find, among the large number of archives in Vanderbilt University Library's special collections, two letters from the poet to Zapata, one in English (1961) and another in Spanish (1963). In both of the letters, Hughes asks Zapata about his writing (as well as his life in Colombia) and also mentions his own current projects. The reason that I find this relationship fascinating is that Hughes is one of the first writers to coin the phrase "black is beautiful" and incorporated this aesthetic into many of his later poems; Zapata certainly seems to have adhered to such an aesthetic in his later literary career as well. In order to have a greater idea as to how Zapata's transition from region to Pan-Africana occurred, I will attempt to find a copy of two travelogue-style works that he published in the late 1940s: *Pasión vagabundo* and *He visto la noche* and accompany those readings with those of Hughes's letters and "Hombre colombiano en la tierra del Ku Klux Klan".

I would also like to compare *Juyungo*'s Ascensión Lastre and Zapata's *Changó*'s associations with the demonic, as a result of their active roles in resistance and liberation. Franklin Miranda cites the scene in which Lastre resists a baptism as a young child. He analyzes how his refusal of this Christian ritual marks him as a little black devil because of his non-submission to a (Western) authority. Miranda also makes it a case to consider the term "juyungo" as reinforcement of his trickster/devil image. Similarly, Yvonne Captain-Hidalgo discusses Zapata's play on the Western Devil through his development of the literary creation *Changó*:

Whereas from a Eurocentric perspective the Devil/Shango connotes wicked powers, from the Afrocentric vision Shango is the saving grace that will lead them out of bondage. Rather than merely a trickster, a signifying monkey, or a Christian-conceived Devil, Shango from this perspective can also be described as the ultimate “bad motherfucker” so rooted in African American cultures. (Captain-Hidalgo 146)

The play on the devil/rebel figure in *Juyungo*, *Changó*, and in other literary works of the African Diaspora (such as Richard Wright’s *Native Son*) is a topic that I find of particular interest. Not only does this literary/cultural figure have a Pan-American presence in Diaspora cultural production (literature, films, folklore, etc.), it has been the subject of highly diverse interpretations from narrator to narrator.

Personal Reflection about Discovering Literature from Afro-Hispanic Writers

Until 2008, while studying in Ecuador, I had never heard of any literary production by diaspora writers of African descent outside of the United States or Cuba. Certainly in the realms of sports, entertainment, music, and dance, I knew that there was much to be said about the African contributions in those cultural elements wherever they appeared in the Americas. In fact, my consciousness of the physical existence of an African diaspora outside of North America and the Caribbean first arrived through watching professional sports. As many United States blacks in the Southeastern States, I was oblivious to the fact that the slavery of Africans in South America ever existed. Had it not been for a course on Black American Literature five years ago, I would have known little about black authors within my own borders outside of Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Chinua Achebe (of Nigeria). This was not a simple question of reading about “black” themes or the literary portrayal of black people. I wondered, most

of all, why there was such a low representation of Afro-American writers in classrooms and reading lists. Were they not adequate cultural contributors on a national or world level? Even if they were, who decided whether or not these writers were worthy of wide readership? Who, in this vast region of the world where so much cultural contact and resultant discourse on identity have occurred, was even considered an Afro-American writer? It was clear to me, then, that this issue went far beyond artistic innovation. While writing this thesis, I realized that the above questions had become more relevant to my research on the topics of citizenship, transculturation, and nation-building.

Reflection about the Personal Experiences that Helped Lead to the Topic of this Thesis: Framing the Unidentifiable

Two events occurred that left me asking questions about how I am identified in the Americas. One took place during my studies in Quito, in which I was stopped and questioned about my nationality. The officers first asked me if I were an Ecuadorian citizen. Upon responding “no”, one of them questioned if I were Colombian. This next inquiry delayed my response. I had always been taught that Colombians were of mixed indigenous and European ancestry; there was no African referent to this country of which I knew before my travel to Ecuador. That is when I thought about the composition of the Colombians whom I had met playing basketball at a park that I will not name. They were almost all of clear African descent. There was a second factor that I considered: on more than one occasion, the negative events reported on the news in Quito involving crimes ranging from minor theft to murder had been attributed to “puro colombianos”, or

undocumented/displaced Colombian immigrants who arrived in Ecuador searching for employment and refuge. At this point, the sudden police questioning had a familiar feel to my experiences with overly curious police officers in my South: as a target of a criminal profile that was framed by my phenotype, community, or nationality. This left me with a final and equally undesirable option: to reveal that I was in fact from the United States, which I felt at the time would seal my fate just as quickly as being Colombian. My mindset was that, as a US black, I likely had the strongest framing as a criminal in any part of the Americas, due to what I perceived as overwhelmingly negative representations of Afro-Americans in the media (unless I was an entertainer or renowned athlete of sort). I took a chance and responded truthfully to the question of my nationality. I was then searched and told afterwards “cuidado” for thieves lurking the streets. I realized that I had gone through what many displaced Colombian immigrants in Ecuador and destitute Mexican migrants in the United States go through much more frequently. I resented this moment of being judged as something outside of a human being: an adverse alien threat to the order of an imagined community.

Not all the moments of mistaken citizenship were so bitter. Suddenly, I was Colombian, Cuban, Jamaican, Dominican, Haitian, Brazilian, African (although never a specific nationality in Africa), Texan, New Yorker, and Floridian (despite never setting foot in any of those states!). I was the embodiment of the contradictions of categorizations, dichotomies, and difference markers that had become a Pan-American tradition since colonial times. Nobody could determine my “official” sovereign state and there was little that could be done about it. This newly discovered ambiguity was

affirmed upon my return to the United States. Before I boarded a bus headed to my apartment, somebody asked me if I were an American football player. After a Spanish-language telephone interview with a graduate program on the bus, another passenger asked if I were a baseball player, instantly relocating my origins to the Hispanophone Caribbean. This, along with noting the growing number of mixed-raced North Americans who have been framed as “looking Hispanic” (as broad as that statement is) and Afro-Hispanics in the United States as “looking black” made me question the determination of race, the national citizen, and the relevance of the political border in a region where there is more transcultural contact and intermarriage than ever (including in the Southeastern United States).

For me, these observations make the research of these literary works all the more relevant to questions that Americans (I mean here, inhabitants of the Americas) have to confront. When does national difference (language, political border, and, much less reliable, physical markers) become such an obsession that an “immigrant” who has native ancestry is suddenly understood not to be “American”? Even within those political borders, there still seems to be a failure to realize that “national culture” and the “national citizen” are not synonymous with “national myth” or indicated by an “official” national border (ex: Afro-Colombia’s relationship with Afro-Ecuador, Mexico with the Western United States). The sociology of these works is certainly not the only reason that I chose these particular works. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading these works because, while the overall themes of each novel may be similar, each of them has unique narrative styles that keep the readings nuanced and the reader engaged. It is in my opinion that Ortiz and

Zapata are able to maintain equilibrium between literary innovation and presenting a problem in sociopolitical discourse (nation-building, citizenship, etc.) without compromising either one and demonstrating that a “strong literary work” does not require that one of the two extremes mentioned above has to be omitted from the text to achieve “art”. That much has been made clear in the Latin American literary tradition, where canonical texts in prose and poetry have often traversed the borders of political discourse and fiction through a preoccupation with the national and the national citizen.

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